

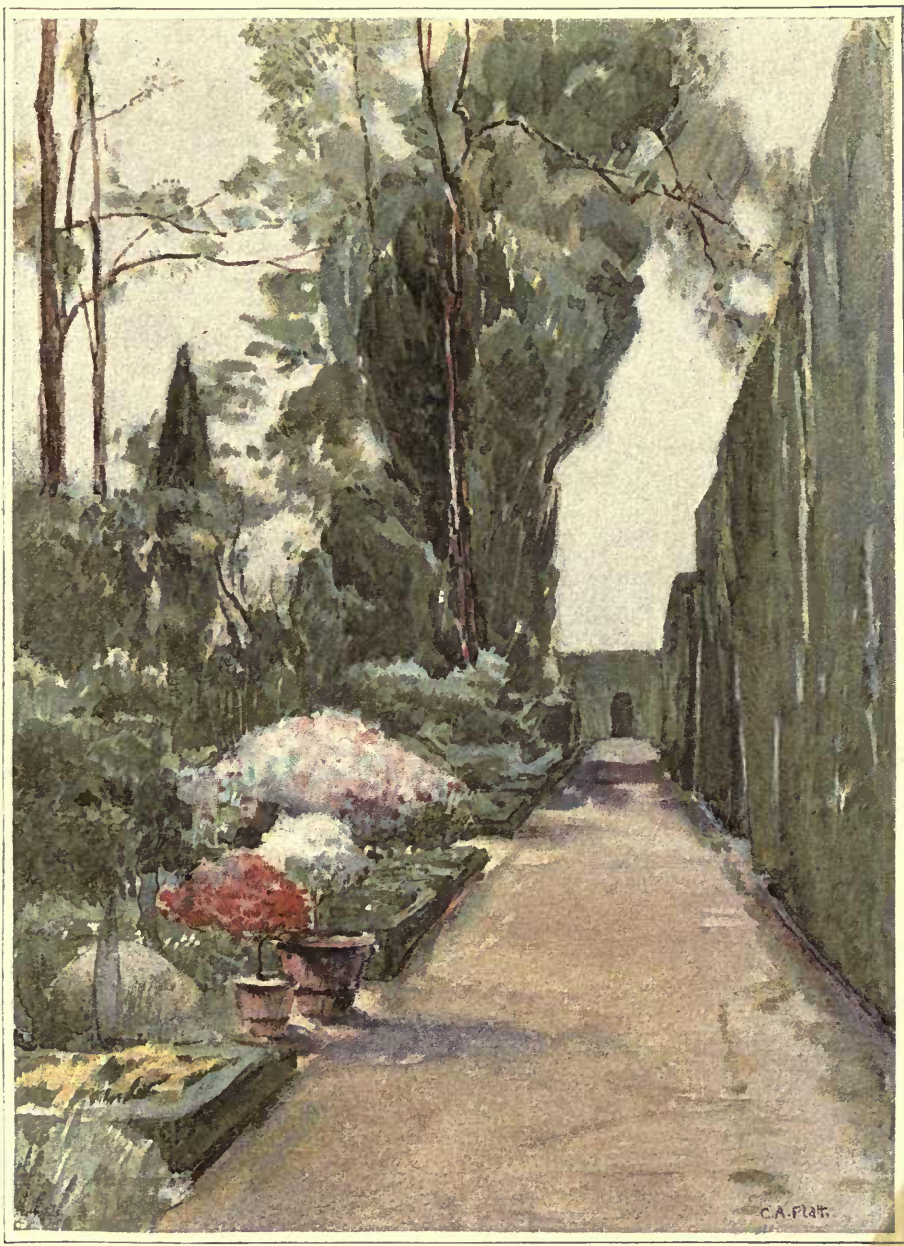


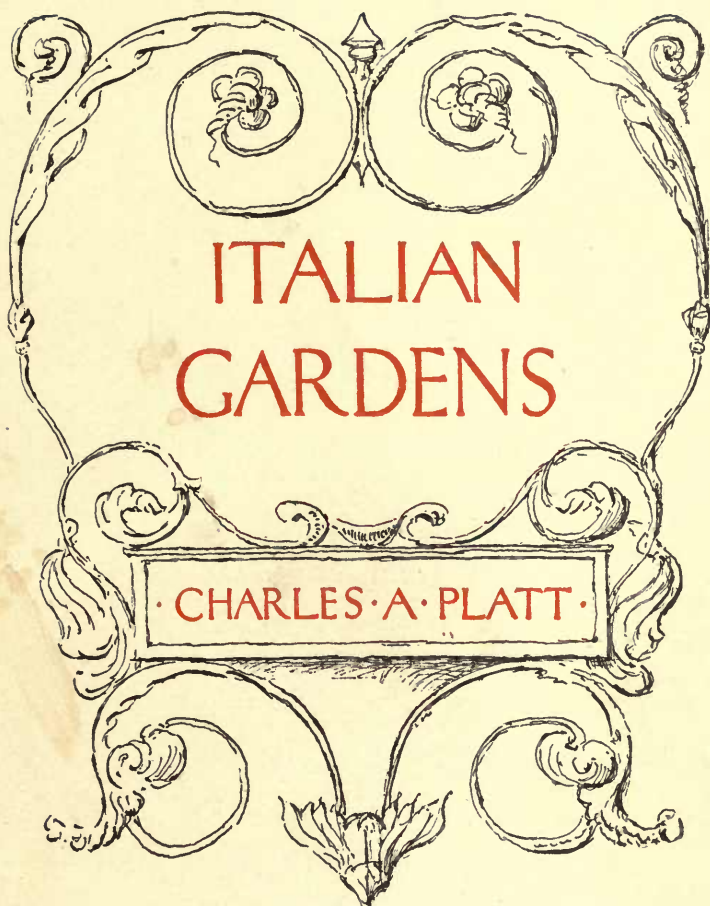


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ITALIAN GARDENS

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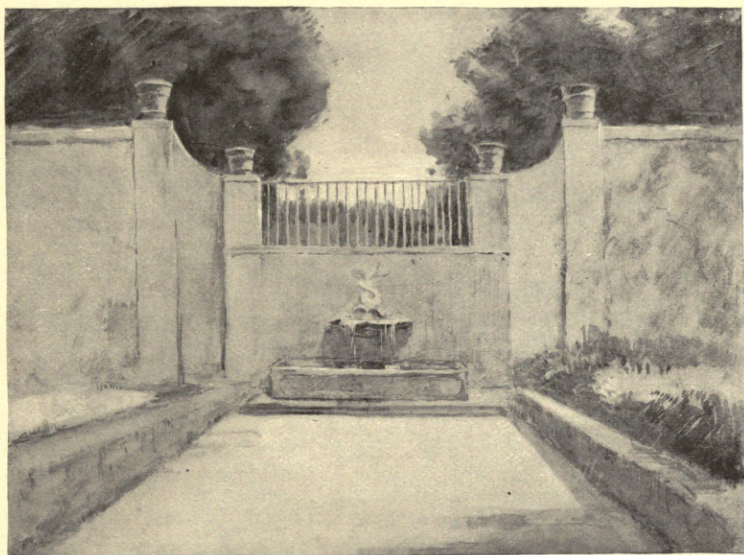


GENERAL

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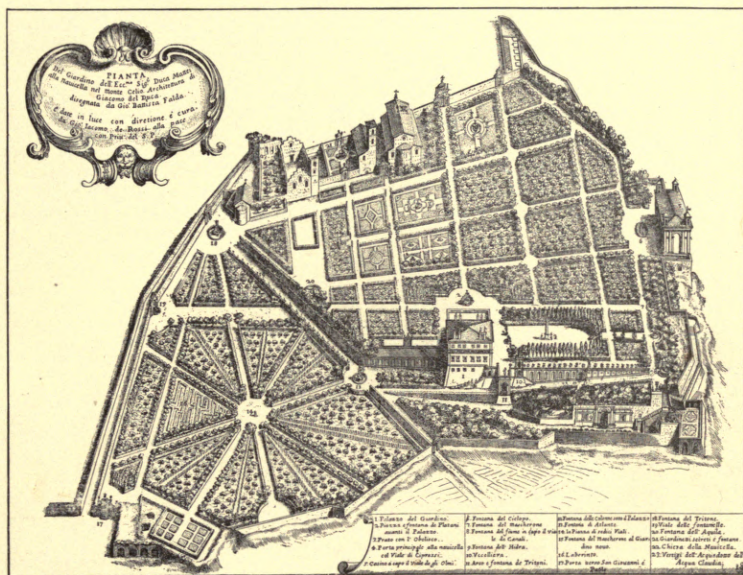


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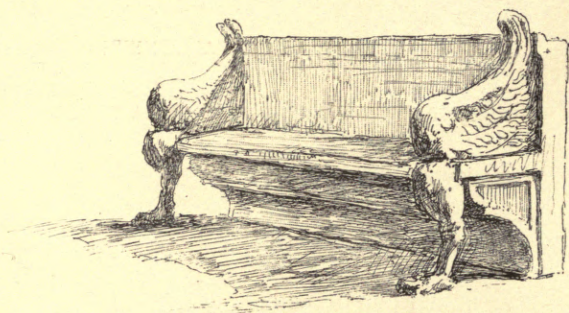
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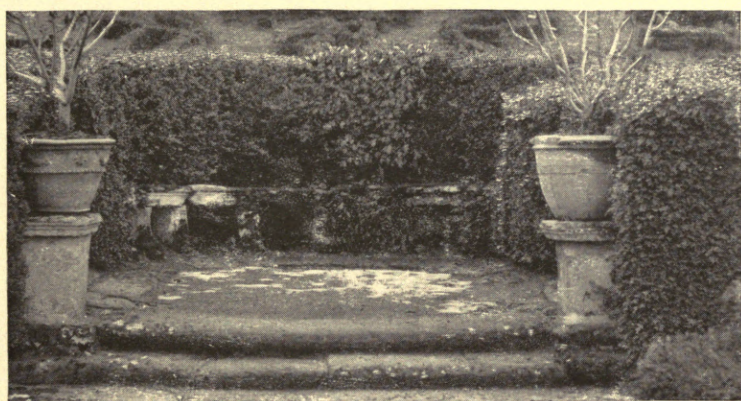
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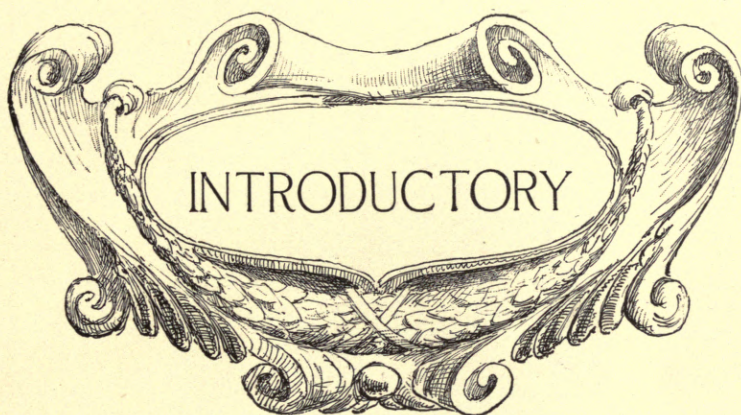
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THE first steps of one interested in the formal style of landscape architecture should be directed to Italy, where at the time of the Renaissance the great gardens which have ever since served as models of this method of design came into existence, the form they took being the natural outgrowth of the architecture and art of the period. While the other arts of the Italian Renaissance have been exhaustively treated in various forms and languages, there is no existing work of any great latitude treating the subject of gardens, the only one of importance being that of Percier and Fontaine. This is an elaborate book by two Frenchmen who studied the subject, and published, in the early part of this century, a series of plates representing the ground-plans and several views of each of the important Italian

villas. Their work was one largely of research and restoration, the result of studying the history of the gardens and the existing designs of their various architects. The outcome of such treatment is that their work fails to give a fair idea of the existing state of the villas. The views from different points of the gardens are so freely treated as to leave one familiar with them in much doubt as to their ever having looked as they are represented, and they are misleading, to say the least, to one who has never seen the gardens. The art of photography has been perfected since their treatment of the subject, and the object of the present writer has been by its means to illustrate, as far as possible, the existing state of the more important gardens in Italy, leaving out the matter of research altogether, since a more profitable study of the subject can be made as the result of these reproductions of nature, and it is quite possible (by making a careful study of all the gardens as a whole) to come to certain conclusions as to the fundamental principles which guided the original designers.

The gardens existing to-day have all passed through a variety of changes. Some of them have gone almost to ruin through neglect or difference of taste in their owners, and, with one or two exceptions, those which

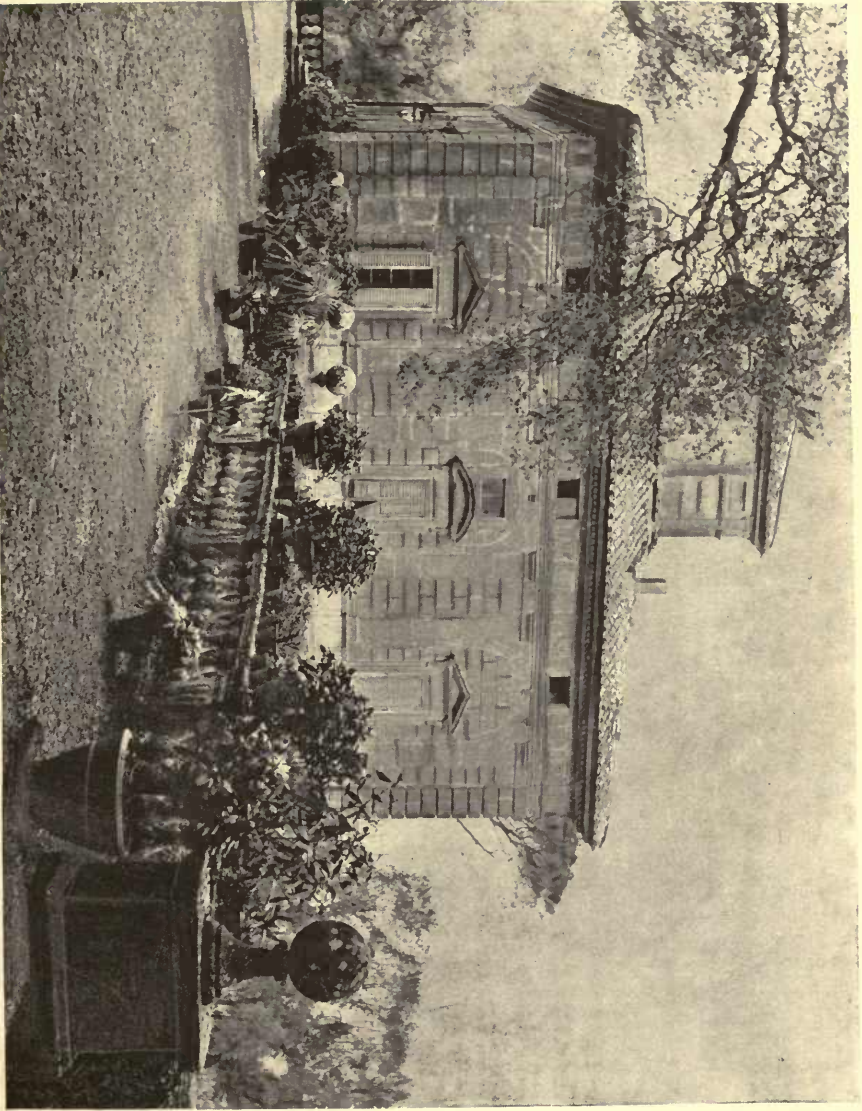


A TYPICAL VILLA PAVILION

are at present the most carefully kept up have suffered the most severely from the changing fashion of the time. However, in almost all of them there is something of their best time which, either by reason of the great difficulty of alteration or from some other cause, has been allowed to remain. It has been attempted in the illustrations here given to reproduce these traits and such others as seem good in themselves.

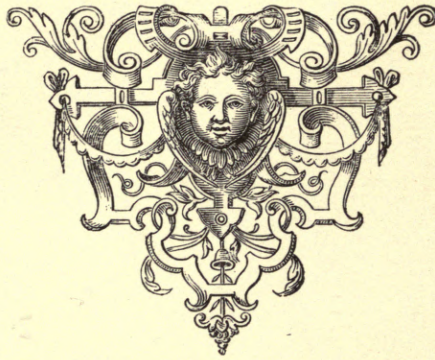
It should be said here that the word "villa" is used in the Italian sense, implying all the formal parts of the grounds arranged in direct relation to the house, the house itself being as much a part of it as the garden or the grove.

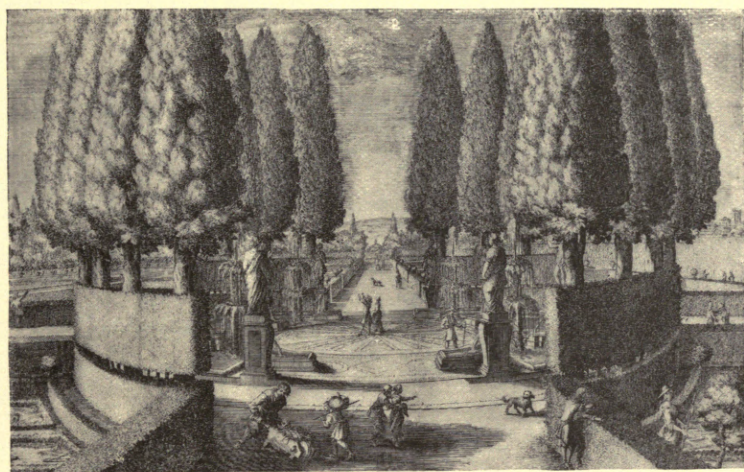
The evident harmony of arrangement between the house and surrounding landscape is what first strikes one in Italian landscape architecture—the design as a whole, including gardens, terraces, groves, and their necessary surroundings and embellishments, it being clear that no one of these component parts was ever considered independently, the architect of the house being also the architect of the garden and the rest of the villa. The problem being to take a piece of land and make it habitable, the architect proceeded with the idea that not only was the house to be lived in, but that one still wished to be at home while out-of-



TERRACE CASINO OF AN ITALIAN GARDEN

doors; so the garden was designed as another apartment, the terraces and groves still others, where one might walk about and find a place suitable to the hour of the day and feeling of the moment, and still be in that sacred portion of the globe dedicated to one's self.

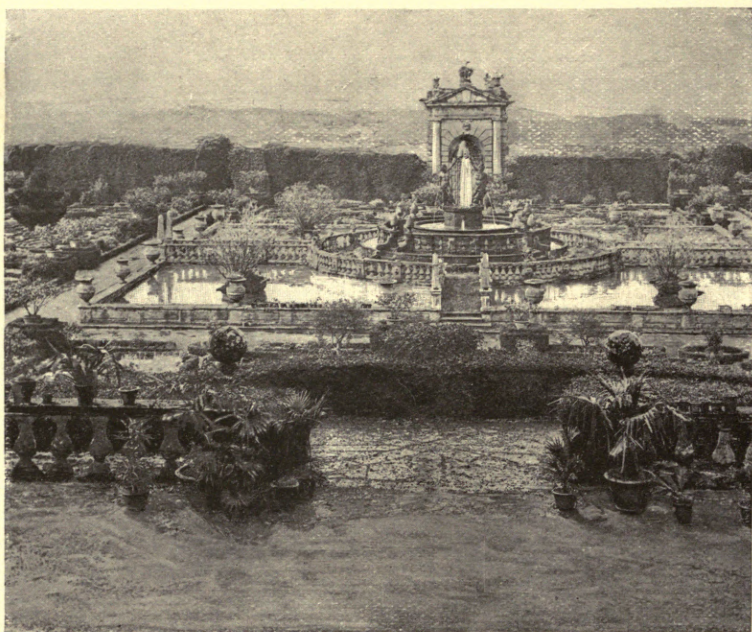







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HE most complete example of the Italian villa—that is, the one best preserving its original form—is the Villa Lante, at Bagnia, not far from Viterbo. This, like all the great villas, was the work of several designers carried through the lives of several owners, but the most important part was from the designs of Vignola, and sufficiently completed in his lifetime to give his stamp to the whole. While a considerable part of the park has been allowed to go to decay, the house and gardens and all that part of the design known as the “villa” have been kept up, and probably to-day present a better idea of the Renaissance garden than does any other in Italy.

The flower-garden of the Villa Lante is southwest from the house, or rather houses, there being two, one for domestic purposes and the other for entertainments. These are at either end of the terrace which overlooks the garden. The principal street of the

town leads directly up to the gate, upon entering which one finds one's self in the midst of a profusion of flowers, and facing a fountain which makes the central feature of the garden. The fountain consists of a group of bronze figures on a circular base surrounded by four large basins, which receive the falling water. Looking beyond the fountain, the eye is led, by means of a series of terraces and fountains between the two houses, to the highest part of the land; this is thickly covered with trees, which form a background for the architectural features. The garden proper covers about an acre of ground, but so large a space is taken up by the fountain and its surrounding embellishments that the actual space for planting is much less than one would imagine. A magnificent box hedge, very dense and high, protects the garden on the north and west, the south being open and overlooking the extensive campagna. Making a part of the eastern wall is the orangery — a building which forms a very necessary part of every garden in Italy—wherein the orange-trees and the tender plants grown in pots are stored in winter. The important paths of the "parterre" are marked by small box hedges, accented at the corners by large orange-trees in pots.

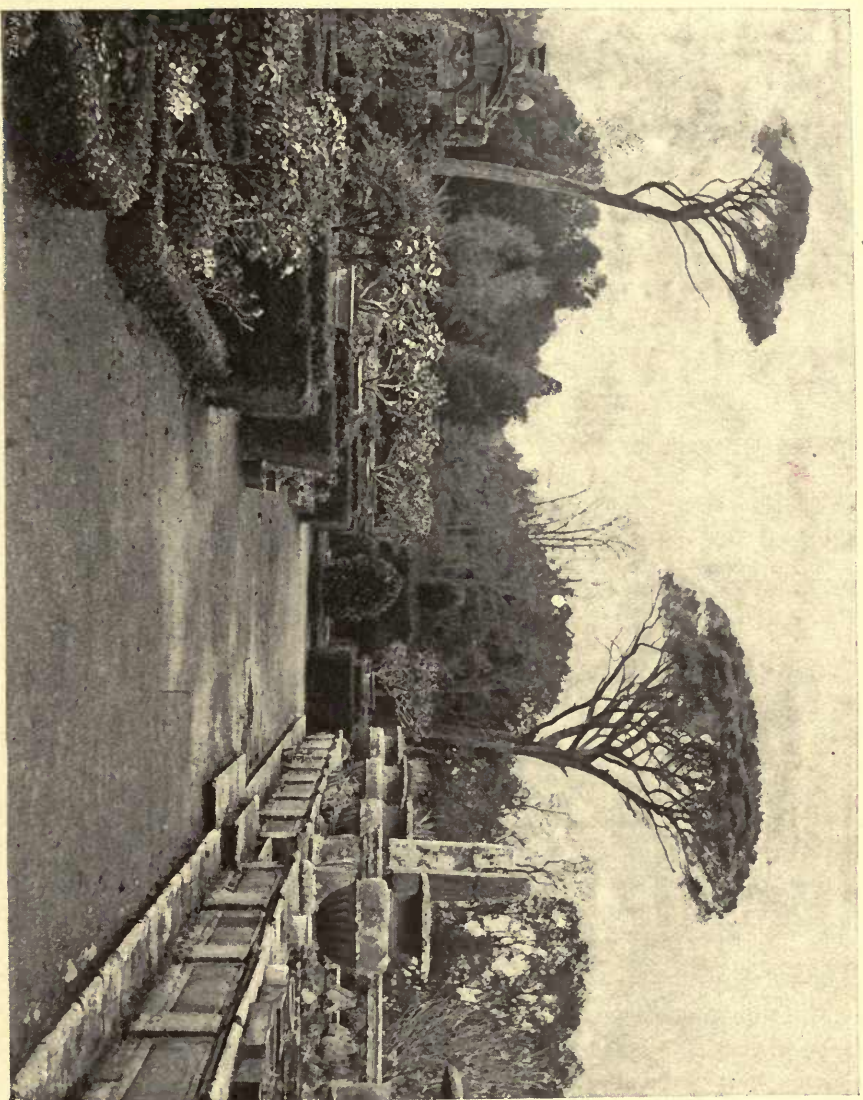
The main features of the garden are so admirably



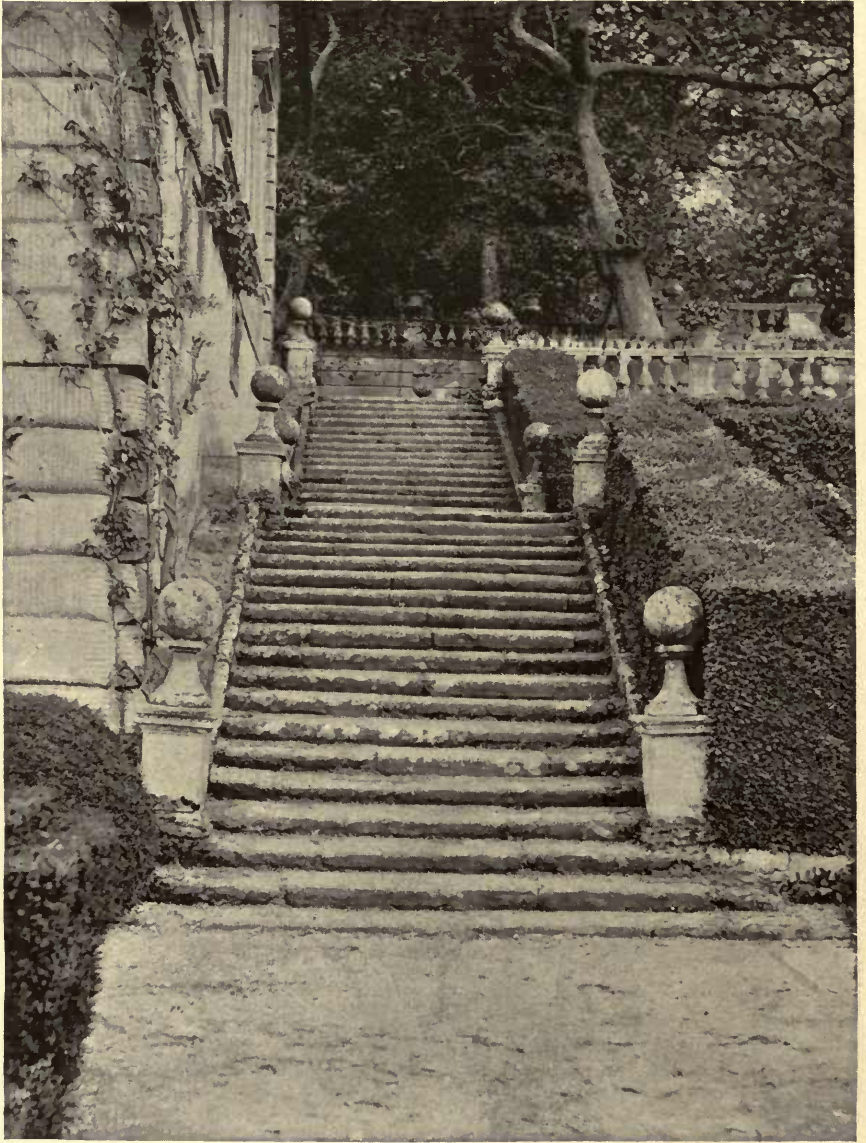
CENTRAL FOUNTAIN, VILLA LANTE

arranged that there is no point of view from which the effect is not good. The problem of treating so large a space was rendered difficult from the fact that the chief point of view is from the house terrace, necessitating a large scale in the architectural details and in the cut forms in green. The large lines of ponds surrounding the fountain form the basis of the scale, the large stone vases at the corners being balanced by forms of corresponding size on the surrounding paths. These large forms are filled in on the architectural part with balustrades and small carving, and among the growing things the flowers and small plants. Thus from above the four sheets of water reflecting the sky form the necessary contrast to the various characters of the planting and the formal details.

Two stone staircases lead to the terrace which connects the houses. Another fountain marks the centre of this terrace, and the whole is shaded by large sycamore-trees; and here, between the garden and the wood, the family live. If they wish sunshine, they turn one way; and if cool and shade and the sound of running water, the other; though, for that matter, there is no place in the villa where the trickling of a fountain may not be heard. Another series of staircases, combined with fountains, leads up from this



IN THE GARDEN, VILLA LANTE



CASINO STAIRWAY, VILLA LANTE

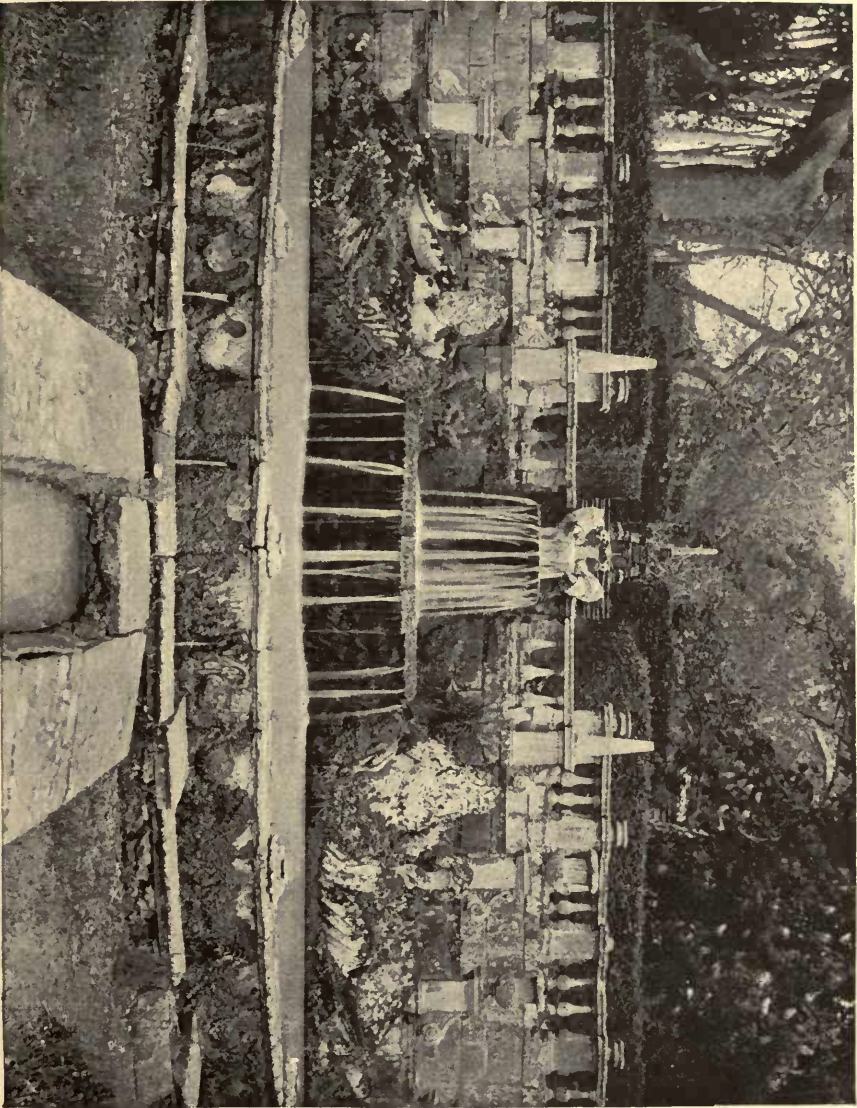
terrace to a walk on either side of the water-course, conducting the water from the upper fountains to those we have just passed. At the top is the "bosquet" or grove, and in its centre, flanked by two most beautiful pavilions, is the reservoir. This is, in its turn, enclosed in a kind of court of Doric columns, supported on pedestals and connected by balustrades.

The sylvan court thus composed makes the bosquet of the Villa Lante one of unusual beauty. The trees behind the columns form a dense glade. The branches of the trees are allowed to grow in and out, making the effect that of being surrounded by a forest. The two pavilions which mark the corners of this enclosure deserve special attention; there is nothing of the kind in any other villa, and they form the key-note of an exceedingly well-conceived place.

It will be seen that in the Villa Lante the main features of the Italian villa are found in much of their original perfection — namely the house, the flower-garden, the terrace, the grove, the fountains, and the water system; and a general study of other villas will show that their different dispositions are the result of harmoniously combining these different parts with the natural formation of the land. If any prominence is given to one or the other of these features, it is sug-

gested by some natural cause. The Villa Lante is built on gently rising ground, and there is less terracing here than in the sites usually selected for Italian villas. In no other, however, are there so many important characteristics still to be found. Moreover, the arrangement is so compact, and the relation of one part to another is so obvious, that they seem to justify its selection as the starting-point in the study of Italian gardening; not because it is the most important or the most beautiful, but because it serves best as a key by the aid of which one can go to the less perfect villas and better understand their probable arrangement.





SWAN FOUNTAIN, VILLA LANTE







IN Rome the most important villa, on account of its size, is the Borghese; but here very little now remains beyond the main forms of the original plan. Especially that *intime* portion of the gardens immediately surrounding the house has been allowed to go to decay. There is no large flower-garden making a feature in itself, though at the time the villa was kept up a great many flowers were grown throughout the place, and there were several small flower-gardens of minor importance. There were two of these of especial interest, one at either end of the casino; but nothing now remains of them but the high walls by which they were enclosed, and some traces of the fountains. Beyond the fine avenue and walks, the one feature of interest in the Borghese at present is the Piazza di Siena—the old race-course—and how much of this may be the result of change it is difficult to know. It is, however, so delightful now that one does not care to be too curious about its past. Its

shape is oblong, the sides gently terraced by stone steps (now greatly overgrown with grass), and at the end are a fountain and a magnificent walk of old ilex-trees. On the two long sides, behind the steps, are rows of very fine stone-pines. In early summer this is a favorite resort of the people, who come to sit on these grassy steps and to walk about on the lawn. Although there are no races, I have seen quite enough of a gathering here to give an idea of its ancient look on a gala-day. No more charming theatre for an outdoor entertainment, either equestrian or athletic, could possibly be imagined.

There are many architectural details of interest in the Villa Borghese, some fine gates and fountains and stone benches. These are most all seemingly detached now, but once formed a part of the elaborate plan of the villa. One of the most interesting features is the wall enclosing the open space in front of the casino. This is most skilfully designed for the gentle slope of the land, stone benches alternating with balustrades. It is very suggestive as an admirable enclosure for a terraced garden. There is much that is suggestive in the detached garden architecture of the Italian villas, their surroundings are so often in bad taste and their original meaning quite lost sight of.



PIAZZA DI SIENA, VILLA BORGHESE





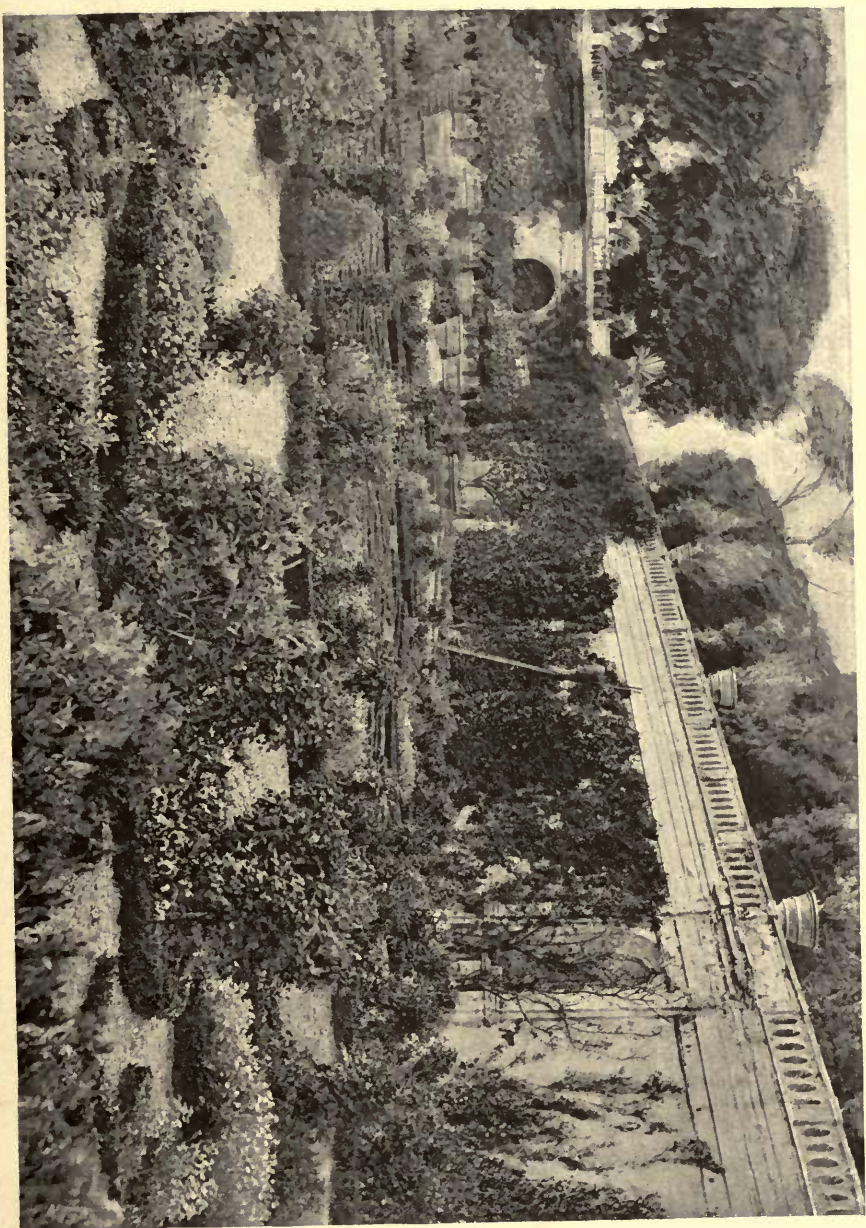
VILLA:PAMFILI



F the Villa Pamfili the flower-garden is all that has kept its original form, and here the details of the arrangement of the "parterre" have been quite changed, and are now very much too hard and cut up. The disposition of the house in relation to the garden is somewhat similar to that at Lante, the house making a part of the terrace which overlooks it, the difference being that there is here but one house facing the centre of the garden, instead of one at either end. The garden occupies an enormous space at the south of the house, its west end being cut out of the side of a hill and walled in, and its east end forming a terrace. To see this garden to advantage one should be either in it or in the house, as from a distance the boxlike form of the building offends one's sense of proportion. The original scheme of the architect was never carried out, if we are to believe an old print, which adds two long wings to the house, and gives, in connection with

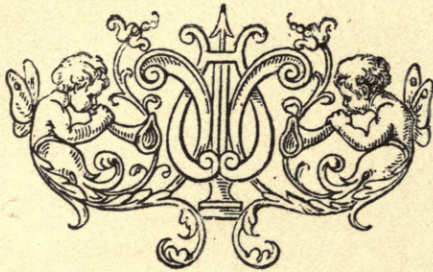
it, an admirable arrangement of trees, which would have vastly improved the general effect. What remain of the old garden are its fine proportions, the walls and gates at the west, and the beautiful staircases and balustrades at the south and east. The central fountain has been removed, and the only water there now is in the basin at the enclosed end. The arrangement of the flower-beds is made up of scroll-work in box or gravel, but there are no fine large forms, such as should surround this smaller work. The result is that the paths are everywhere too obvious, and the hardness of the design offends one at every turn.

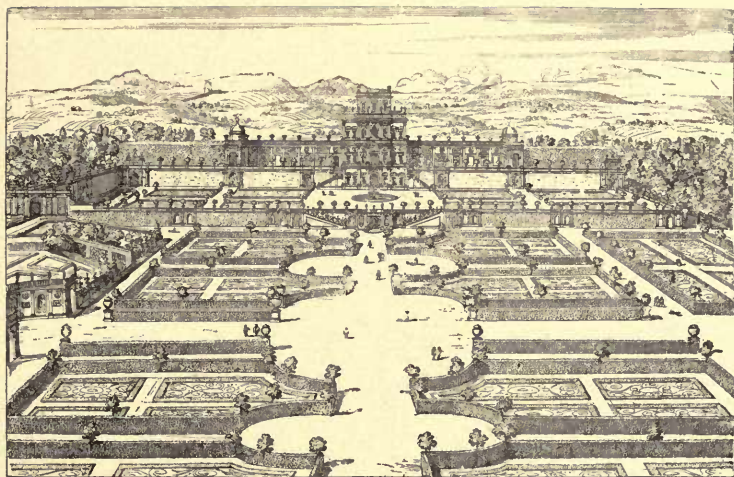
This lack of harmony is made particularly manifest by a very beautiful circular form given to the western terrace. There is no approach to this from below, and its position in a mass of irregularly placed trees with grass growing about its base is particularly unfortunate, and gives it a very detached look. There is a large plantation of stone-pines in the more remote parts of the villa. These were placed there by the great French landscape architect, Le Nôtre. They give a certain dignity to the drives and from a distance suggest a more interesting place than one finds upon closer examination.



FLOWER GARDEN, VILLA PAMFILI

There is a fine avenue of ilexes at the west end of the garden; and there was once, at the south, an elaborate system of hedges, plantations, and architecture leading the eye off into the distance. This has now all been done over in the English manner, with irregular clumps of trees, and wide stretches of lawn, quite out of harmony with the formal plan of the villa. The south wall is typical of what a garden wall should be—covered as it is with vines of every sort. These make masses of varied greens, which, with the bloom of the flowers, is very telling against the white wall.

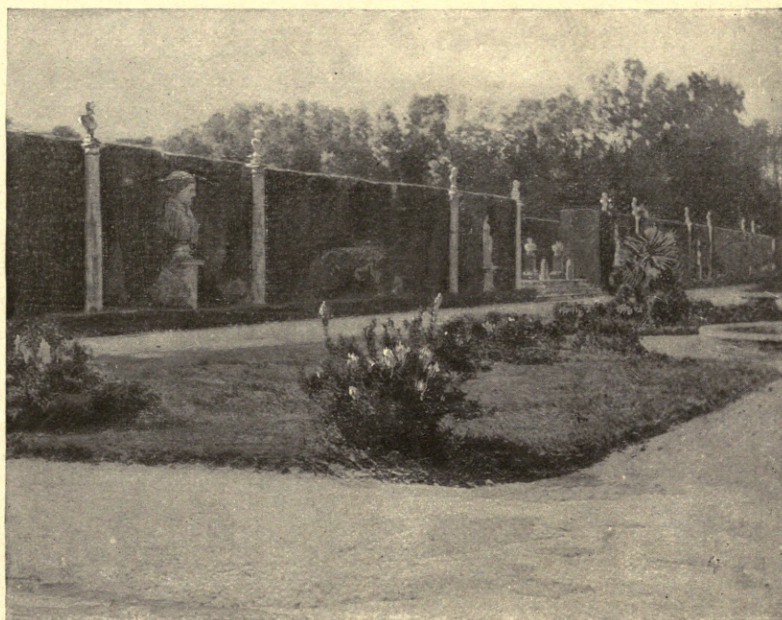





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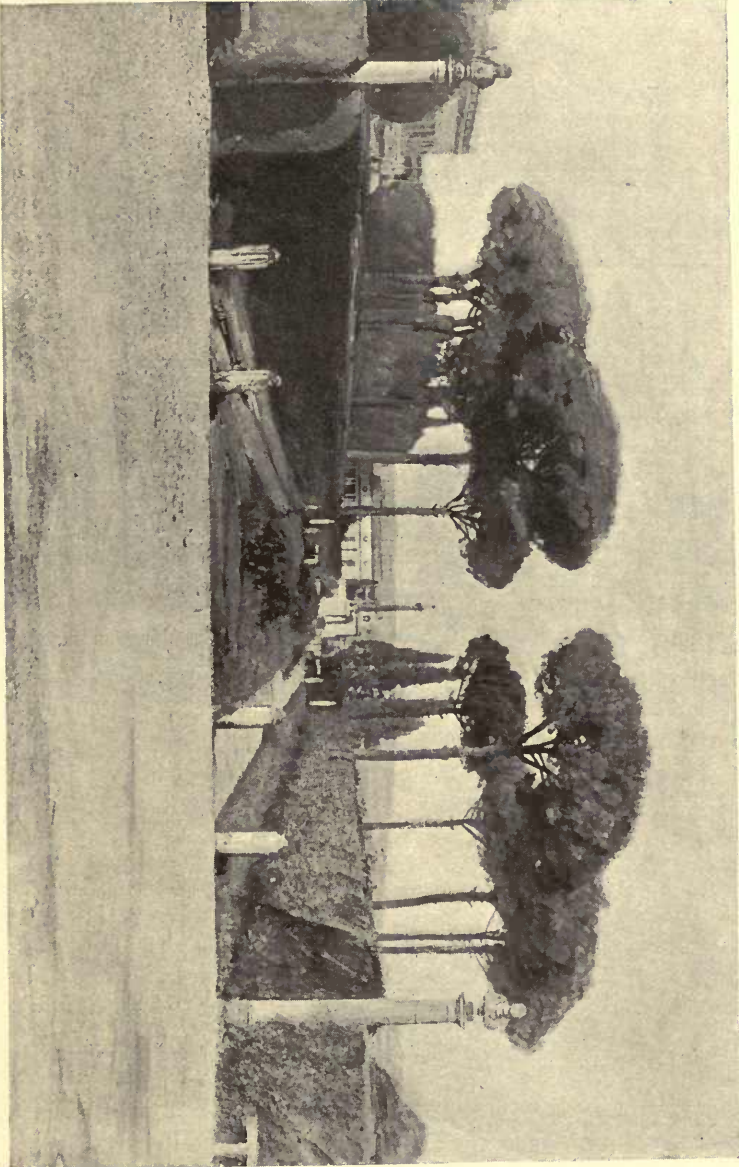




HE Villa Albani was made at the end of the eighteenth century, and consequently the architecture is very florid in character. Though the general plan is a good one, the prominence given to the architecture makes the effect of the whole hard, and particularly so on account of the paucity of the planting. The flower-garden has no flowers in it! or such, at least, is its effect. The garden is so placed—being sunk between the house and a pavilion which encloses its end—that it is impossible not to look down upon it. This is the usual placing of Italian flower-gardens; but to look well under these conditions very full planting is absolutely necessary. Here one looks down and sees nothing but scroll-work in box, and great varieties of colors in gravel and sand occupying spaces that should be filled with flowers, all the efforts of the gardener going to make a permanent effect and to preserve his design at any cost, the result being the reverse of that

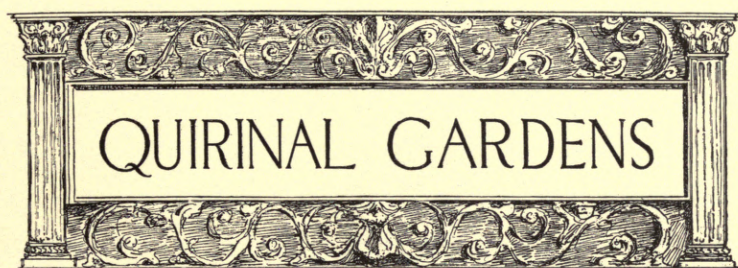
looked for in a flower-garden, the design, indeed, being made altogether unpleasant by its hardness. The other features of the Villa Albani have not suffered as the garden has, and the ilex walk leading from the south wing of the house is unusually fine, being slightly elevated above the house, and approached by a handsome flight of steps. In this walk there are some very interesting statuary and old Roman tables. The cypress hedges at the south of the garden are as fine as anything in Italy. They are admirably arranged with columns at intervals; these, with statuary, make a fine contrast by means of their deep green background. The entrance to the villa is somewhat weak, but it leads to an interesting circle of stone-pines surrounding a high column. The weakness lies in the fact that one's eye is not led beyond this, and that there is no evident avenue of approach to the house.

The interest in the plan of the Villa Albani lies in the fact that the ground it covers is very nearly flat, the garden alone being lower than the rest of the villa. The architect had none of the advantages of a site naturally interesting in itself, and no natural formation in the landscape to suggest treatment, so that the design is specially worthy of study as a pure creation.




GENERAL VIEW OF GARDENS, VILLA ALBANI





QUIRINAL GARDENS

 HE royal gardens are an interesting study on account of the great height of the hedge growth. Judging from an old print of the plan of this garden, it was originally laid out in a very open manner as an enormous "parterre." There is but one level throughout the plantation, and this was cut up into large squares surrounded by low hedges enclosing flowers. The fountains and statuary were very frequent, and at the sides the walks were shaded by ilex-trees. The great height of the hedges which once marked the borders of the beds have now turned these enclosures into most charming apartments, the passages from one to another being arches cut through the dense growth. In some places the hedges of laurel, box, and ilex reach a height of thirty feet, and as a growth in itself is remarkable; but when one finds it formed into courts connected by long alleys, and with the doorways and arches apparently carved in the dense green, the effect is quite

wonderful. There is nothing at all like it in any of the other gardens; it is quite unique. To one who doubts the advantage of straight lines in gardening, the extreme beauty of the perspective in the Quirinal would teach much. The principal hedge walk nearest the palace shows this at its best. At the right of the path is the great ridge leading in a perfectly straight line to the limit of the garden; on the left are formal beds filled with flowers, allowed to grow much as they will, and the formality of the mass cut up by trees and flowering shrubs. Pots of azalias and orange-trees are placed here and there to make the opening of the smaller paths, near to sides of the walk, form a contrast one to another, and make of the whole a most complete and satisfying garden effect. There are other parts of the garden that have not been so skillfully treated, and where the admirable opportunities, the result of time and overgrowth, have been neglected. An attempt to produce an English lawn is misplaced here, and the disposition of the statuary and the surroundings of the fountains are unfortunate. These things are lost sight of, however, in the beauty of the greater part of the garden, the charm of the old walks, and the delightful seclusion of the green walled courts.

AN OVERGROWN CORNER









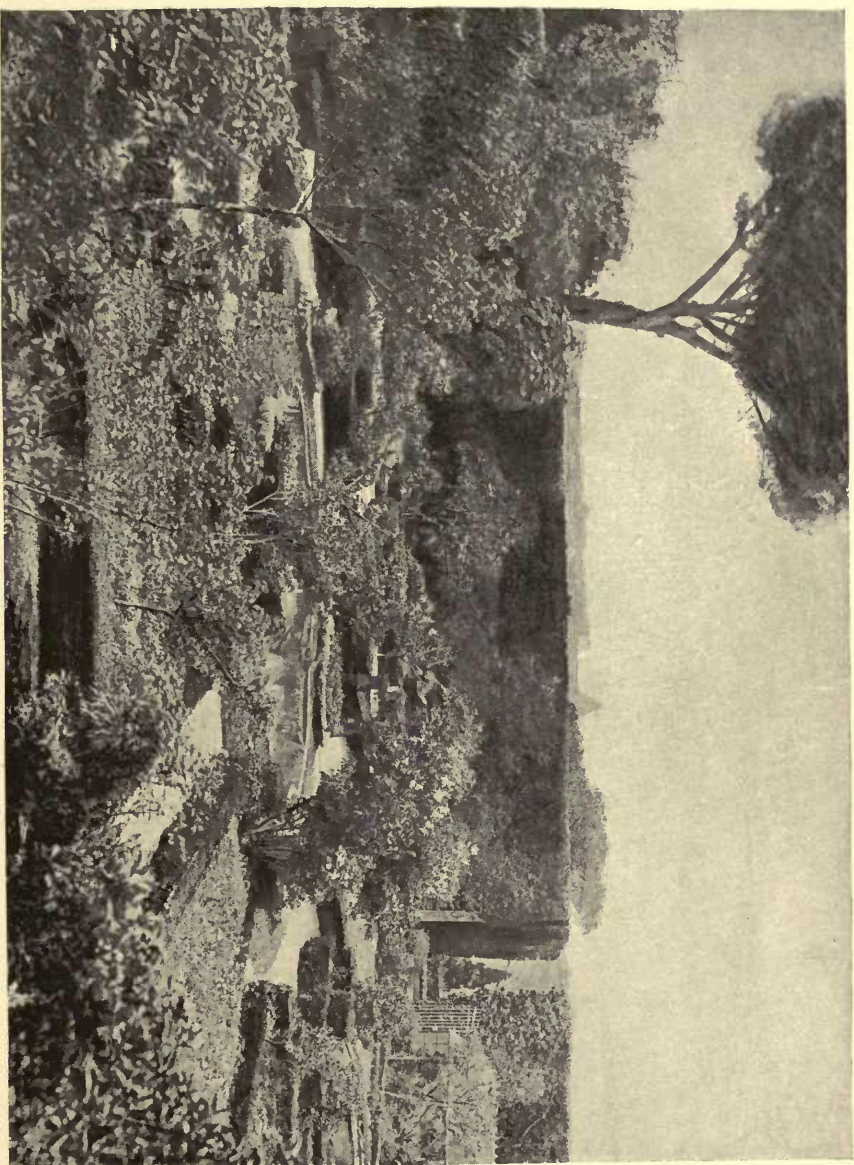
FOR a flower-garden, pure and simple, there is none more charming in Italy than the Colonna. In the very heart of Rome, it is so concealed that one might pass it a hundred times without suspecting its existence. The palace is at the foot of a hill, and is separated from the garden by a sunken street and terraces. The street is crossed by several bridges, and in looking from the palace to the terraces is entirely invisible.

The hill is very abrupt, and one is led through ilex walks and up stairways, along terraces, to the flower garden at its very top. The garden, however, is not in so unsheltered a position as this might seem to indicate, being protected at the south by a high hedge. An iron gateway at an opening in this hedge forms the entrance to the garden, and on passing through this, one is immediately in the midst of a most beautiful mass of bloom, where all growing things seem at their best. The arrangement of the garden is very simple,

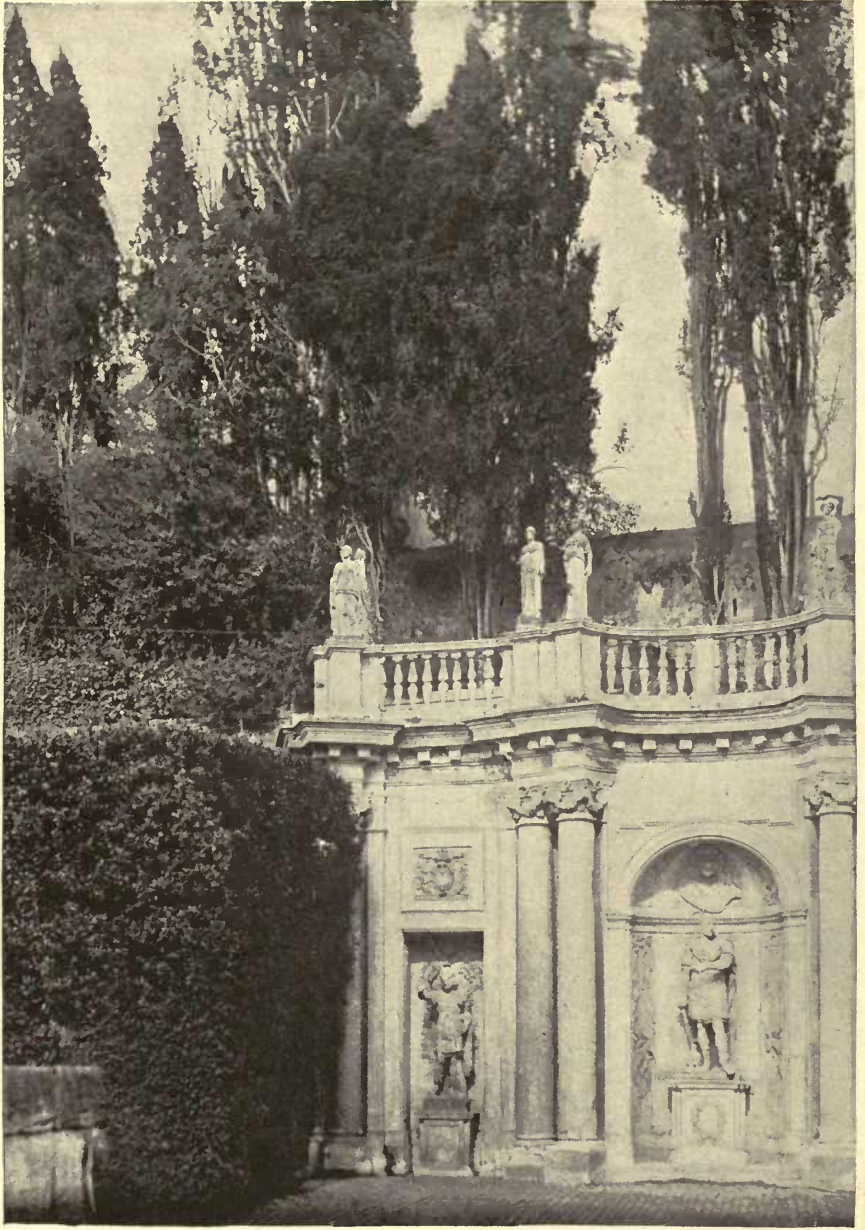
the paths all radiating, like the spokes of a wheel, from a central basin. The beds are slightly elevated above the walks, and their borders of box form the borders of the paths; the area covered is about half an acre, but so admirable is the plan and so compact the planting that it seems much larger, one sees no paths except that upon which he is standing, seeming always to be surrounded by a great profusion of flowers, with just enough of formality to give them their value.

There is no architectural feature in this garden beyond the basin in its centre, which is sufficiently low to receive the reflection of the growth about it. The garden owes its charm—which is very great—to its very simple design and the admirable planting. It is enclosed on the east and west by high walls covered with vines; at their basis are several tiers of steps with flower-pots.

The Colonna, for its size, is by no means important in comparison with others of the well-known gardens, but it is most instructive in its simplicity and charm when contrasted with such gardens as Albani and Pamfili, where everything has been lost sight of but the preservation of an elaborate “parterre.” The flower-garden of this villa is so distinctively itself an interesting feature that it is unnecessary to dwell much



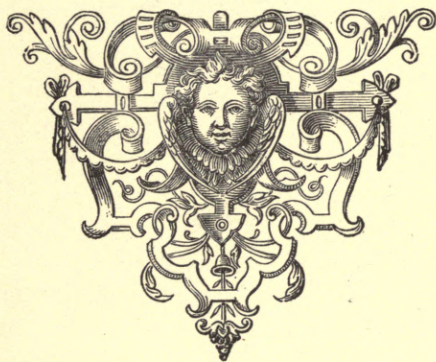
THE COLONNA FLOWER GARDENS

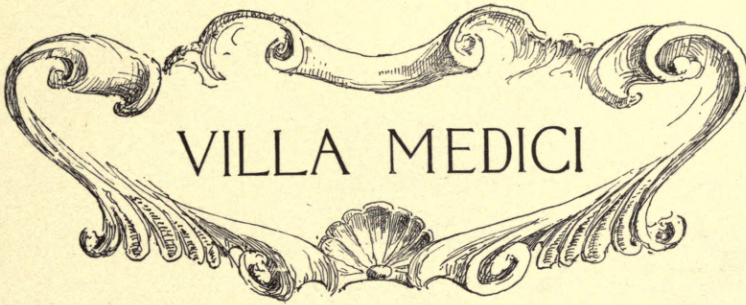


CYPRESSES, COLONNA GARDENS

upon the rest; though the lower terrace, on a level with the first floor of the palace, is also something of a garden, and interesting in itself. It is planted in long tiers, with flowering shrubs bordered by tree-roses, and terminating at the west in a grotto with columns and tall cypresses, and at the east in old statuary half covered with vines and undergrowth.

The side-hill between this and the upper garden was originally occupied by old Roman baths, and the architect has, wherever possible, allowed the mason-work to remain, sometimes forming the old arches into stairways or terraces, and leaving the old brick walls to be covered with vines.









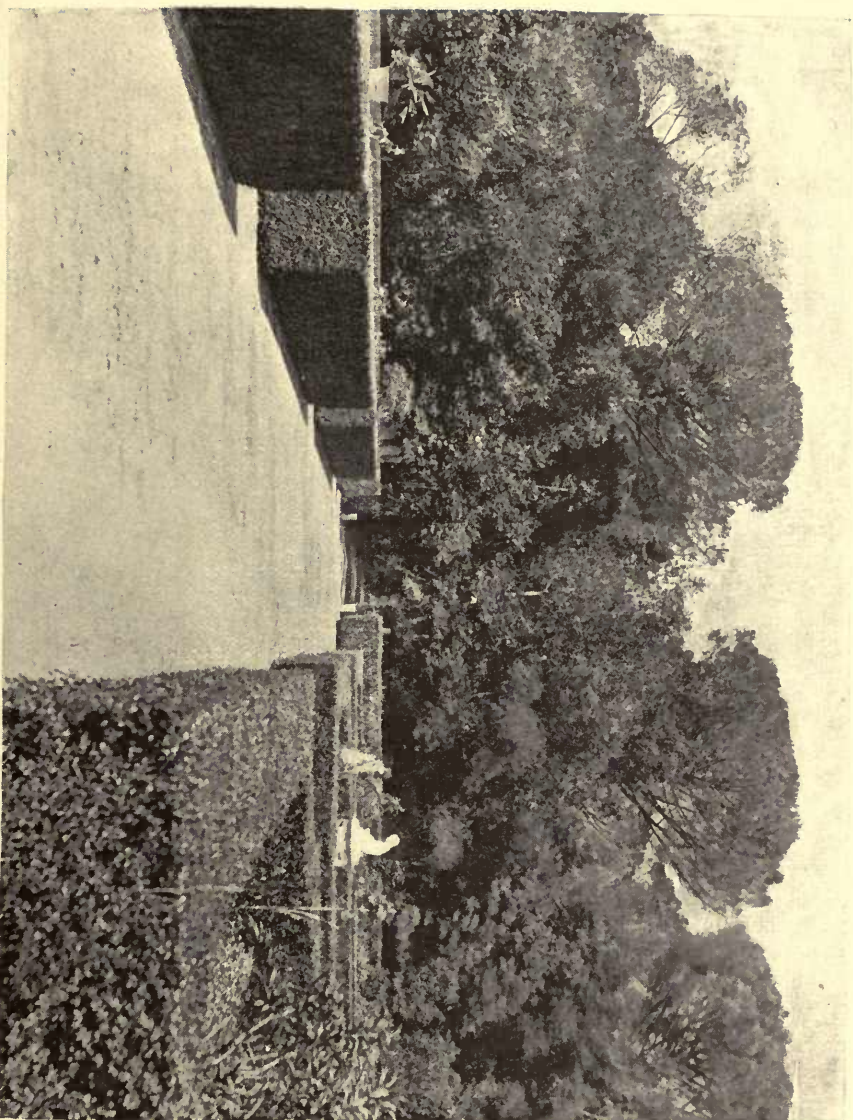
THE Villa Medici, now the property of the French Government, has the most delightful situation in Rome—east of the gardens of Pincio and slightly elevated above them. The entrance to the garden is by a roadway at the left of the villa, and leads immediately into a beautiful grove with straight paths and fountains. Considering its position, this seems really a forest, and one has something of a stroll before reaching the old flower-garden behind the villa. Here most of the traces of the flowers and their original arrangement have disappeared, and little is done to keep the place up in its old glory; even the main features of the “parterre” have been changed with a view to economy, and only the general effects produced by the situation and its relations to the other parts of the villa are left.

There is, however, a great charm in the sharp-cut box hedges which surround the flower-beds, in contrast with the varied outlines of the grove through which

we have just passed. These hedges are so high that one misses the flowers as little as possible, although of course they lead one to pass through the garden, rather than to treat it as a place in which to loiter.

Above the flower garden, to the east, is an architectural terrace leading to an ilex bosquet. This is really the charming feature of the Villa Medici to-day, and there is nothing more delightful in Rome. The trees are very old, and although the place is not large, there is such a complete tangled growth that it is impossible to believe that one is within a stone's-throw of a very busy part of the city. At the end of the central paths is an elevated temple, reached by a flight of steps, and the trees surrounding it are so cut as to give a complete view of the city. There are some delightful old seats in the grove, which one abandons with regret when the custodian arrives to close the gates and turn the visitor away.





THE BOX WALK, VILLA MEDICI







ALTHOUGH this was once one of the most magnificent gardens of Rome, there is very little there at present to suggest this. The interest that one finds is rather in the study of the ancient place than in the beauty of the existing landscape architecture.

The villa has been through a period of great ruin, and the style of gardening in vogue at the time of its partial restoration was quite the opposite of that upon which it was originally designed. The result has been to give its general appearance one without character as a complete work of art, the contrast between the formal and the so-called neutral methods filling one with a sense of lost opportunity. The main features of the old work were of such magnitude as to be ever before the eye, showing what might have been or what has been. The more recent work has been chiefly an attempt to conceal this, or to cover the evidences of its ruin. Although the effect of

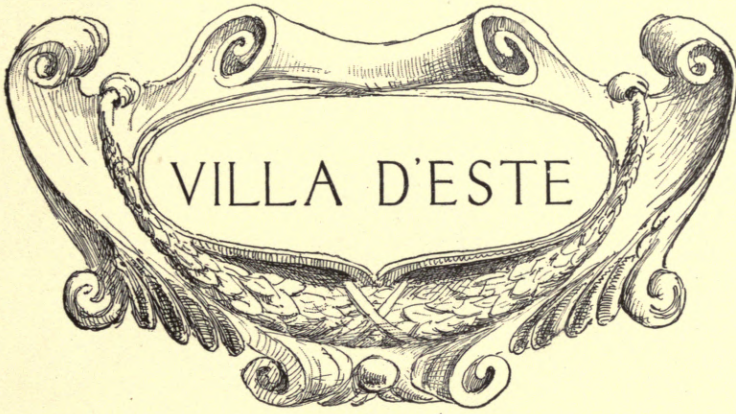
the villa is thus as a whole so unsatisfactory, there are parts, taken by themselves, full of charm, and among these are a series of alleys leading from a small central fountain. High hedges border the paths, and behind them are tall stone-pines, giving shade and marking the perspective of each of these walks as the eye follows them to the end. The flower-garden, though not intended as a show feature, is very interesting in its simplicity. It is intended simply as a place to grow flowers for cutting, and an absence of any design not necessary for the convenience of the gardener has given the place a quaint character which one rarely finds as a result of design. In the centre is a basin from which the flowers are watered, and the beds are in long lines, with a wide path only in the middle of the garden, the lateral ones being lost by the growth of the plants. There are many bits of statuary and architectural details of the Roman time, once used to decorate the gardens of the Villa Mattei. These are now placed often where they do not add to the general effect, but at least where they may be studied by the archæological student.

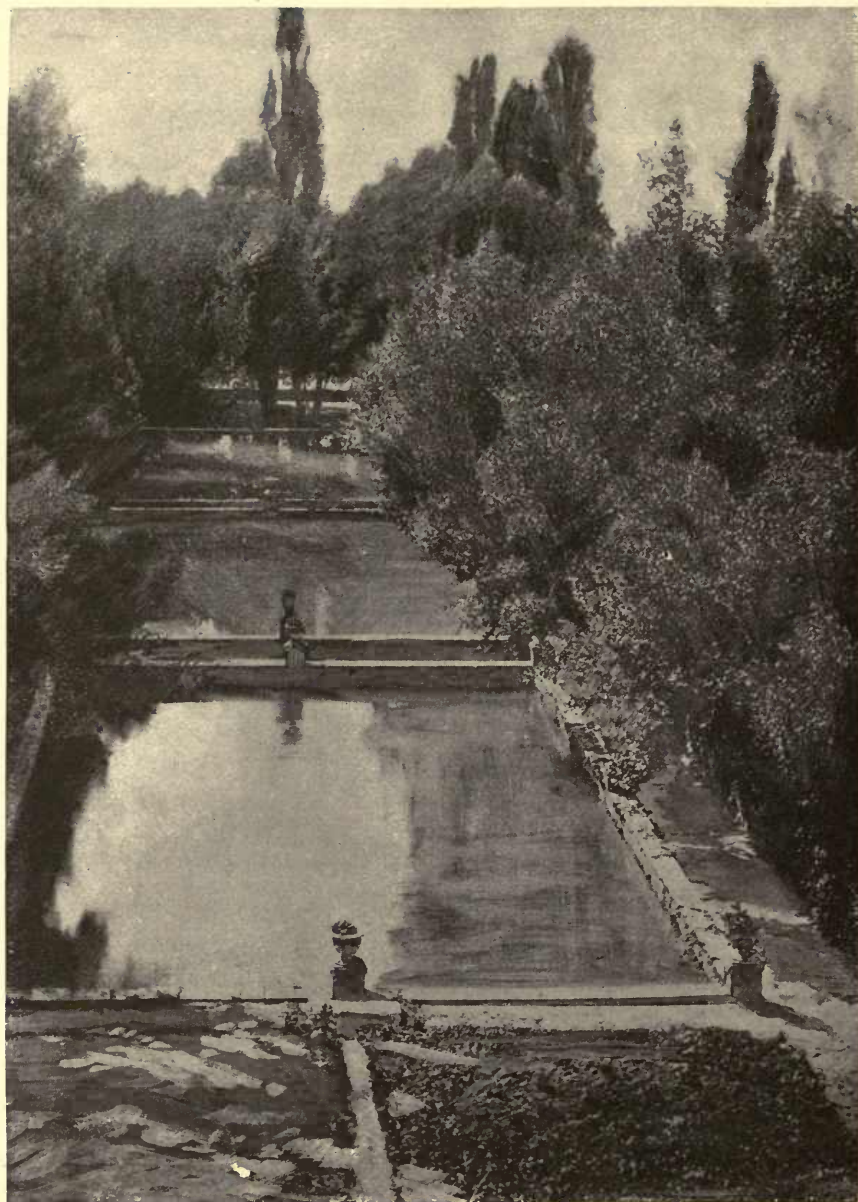


AN OLD ALLEY, VILLA MATTEI



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IN turning from the gardens of Rome and its immediate environs, the Villa d'Este, at Tivoli, is the most important, and, in fact, if one could study but a single villa in Italy, this should be the chosen one.

In its day it was undoubtedly the finest villa in Italy, and although it is now in a state of great dilapidation and decay, its natural advantages and the great beauty of its situation are such, and the construction of its main features so admirable, that it still remains a noble example of landscape architecture of the Renaissance. Not nearly so large as the Borghese or the Pamfili Villa, every inch of its ground has been utilized to the utmost, and the whole arrangement is compact and complete.

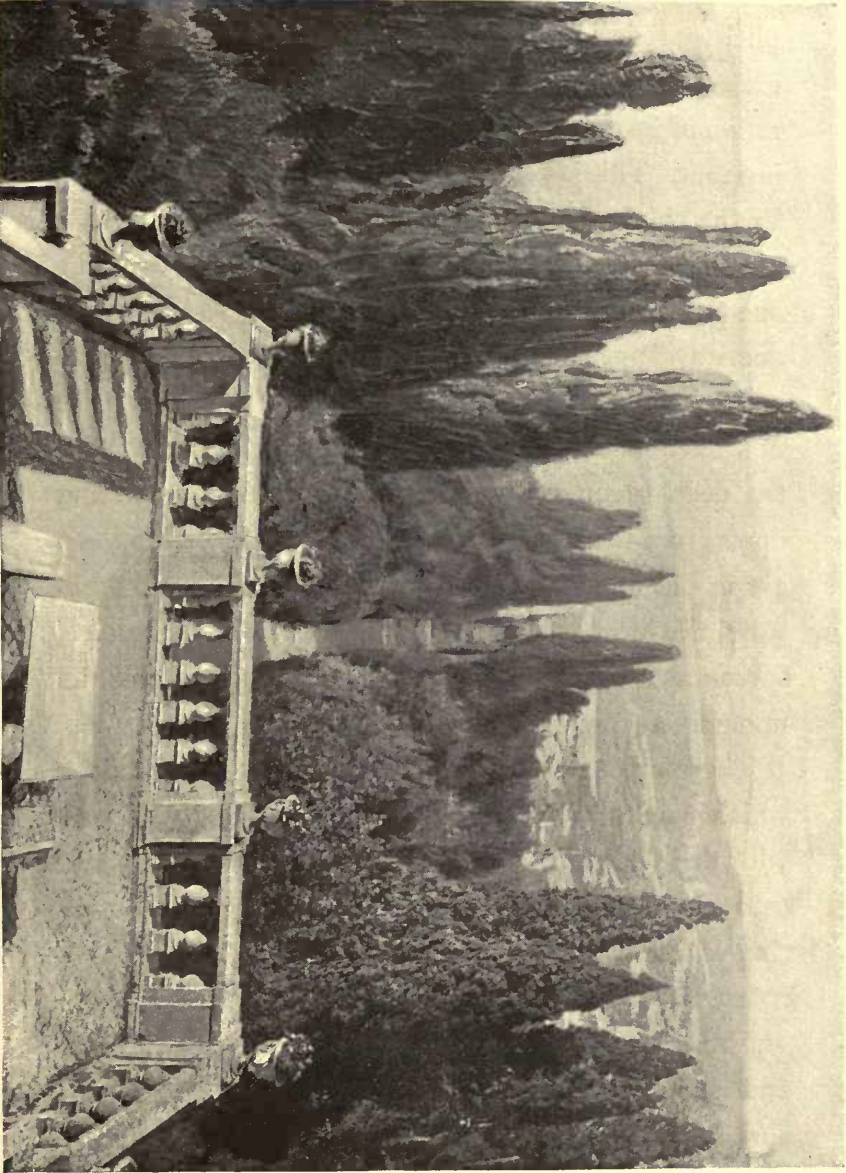
The site of the palace is at the top of an abrupt hill-side, overlooking the Campagna, and the architect's problem lay in the treatment of the extremely abrupt slope, there being no natural flat space except

at the bottom of the enclosure, which is still high above the surrounding country.

The palace itself is built on terraces, the court and entrance being three stories higher than the first open terrace in front of the house. Beyond these a most elaborate system of terraces, connected by stairways and fountains, brings one down to the large terrace below. Beyond the magnificent site, the greatest natural advantage of the place is a practically unlimited supply of water. This the architect has used in every conceivable way, and in addition to the great variety of fountains and grottos there is hardly an architectural feature in the villa in which a play of water is not made to form a part. It might be added that they are now to be found in almost every imaginable state of decay. Most of the fountains and other architectural features have long since been stripped of their finest pieces of statuary, and in being thus stripped many of them have lost their *raison d'être*.

The excavations of Hadrian's villa are the mine from which they were originally taken, and they have now, most of them, found their places in museums, being too valuable to be left in a spot so long uninhabited.

The palace is an enormous structure of perfect sim-

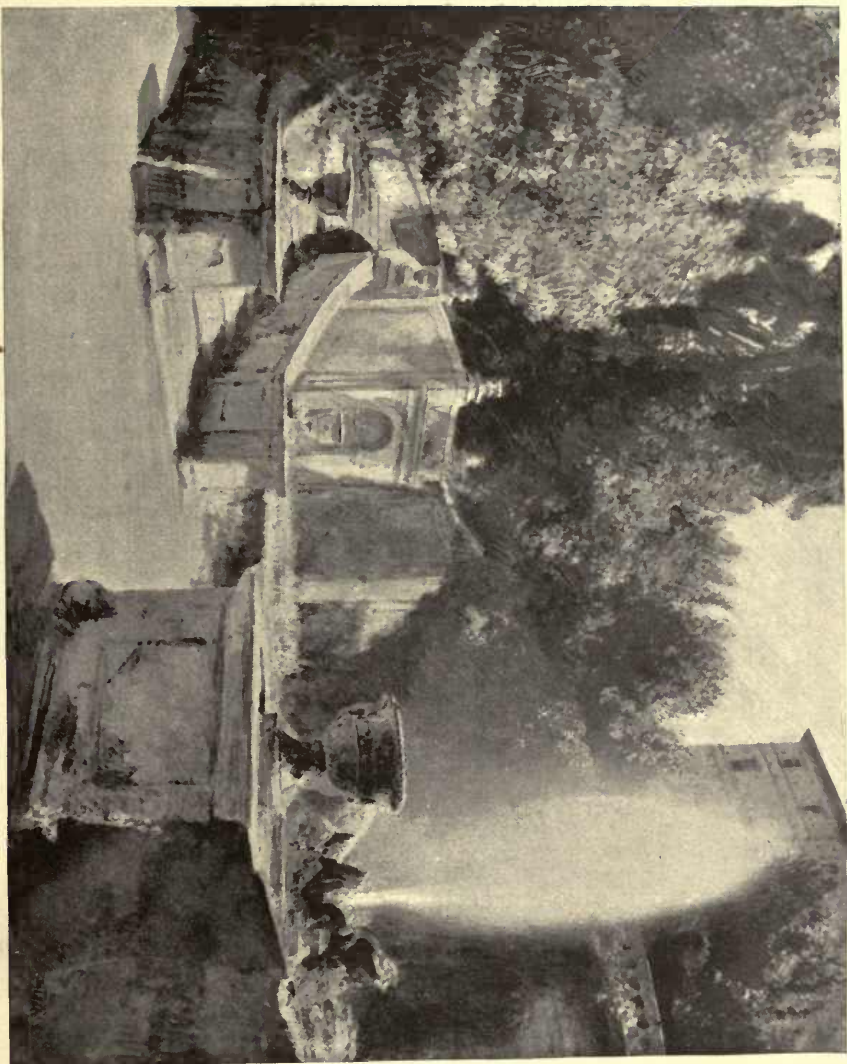


VIEW FROM TOP OF PORCH, VILLA D'ESTE

plicity of design, its long lines contrasting with the elaborate terraces which support it. The only decoration of its exterior is the doorway and staircases leading to it. This is connected with the rest of the garden by the chief system of fountains and staircases, which lead the eye from the lower terrace to the house. To one looking up from below, the intricate design of this doorway appears like most delicate lace-work in comparison with the extreme simplicity of the otherwise unbroken façade of the house, and in contrast with the deep green of the terrace plantation. Looking down from the upper terrace, one sees through a deep cut in the foliage, over a series of fountains and stairways, the large circular fountain on the lower terrace, surrounded by gigantic cypresses, and beyond this the immense expanse of the Campagna.

There are many cypresses throughout the planting which have now grown to an enormous size. These, with their hard-cut edges and sculpturesque forms and great depth of color, make a wonderful foreground for the infinitely increasing delicacy of the Campagna as it loses itself in the sky at the horizon.

There is no flower-garden now at the Villa d'Este, and such is the overgrowth of hedge plants and shrubs on the lower terrace that one would hardly



STAIRWAY AND FOUNTAIN, VILLA D'ESTE

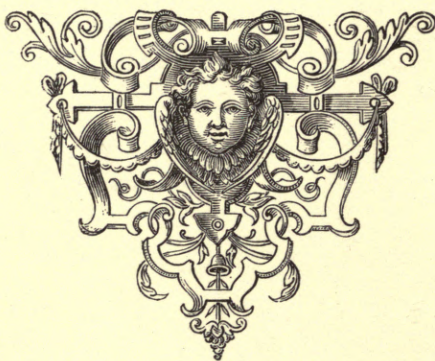
suspect that here was once an elaborate "parterre." At present one finds no flowers at all, except those which have grown wild, and these are frequently to be found where there should be none. In an arrangement so varied as that at D'Este any opportunity for simplicity was valuable, and one was found in the ponds or canals at the foot of the first line of terraces. The form here is perfectly simple, in long straight lines surrounded by high hedges, now overgrown almost into small forests. These ponds are now comparatively stagnant; but they were originally filled by many jets of water flowing from the vases which marked their borders. At present, of course, only the general form is left, and though that is still fine, the great overgrowth of the surrounding hedges naturally dwarfs their effect, and the stairs above them are quite concealed. The old stairway of the Condonata, which was bordered by fountains from top to bottom, is now too overgrown to be seen, and this is the case with many beautiful parts of the villa. While this wildness has given a certain charm of its own to the place, it makes it difficult, if not impossible, to trace much of the original design of the architect.

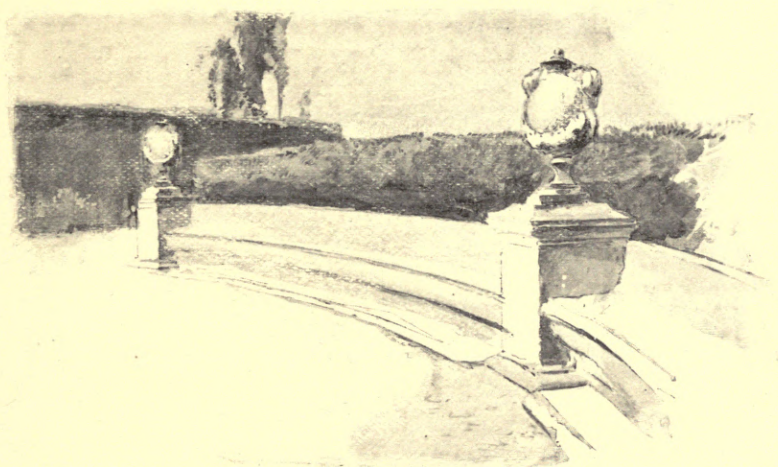
Many of the architectural features have been restored at unfortunate periods or by unskilful hands,

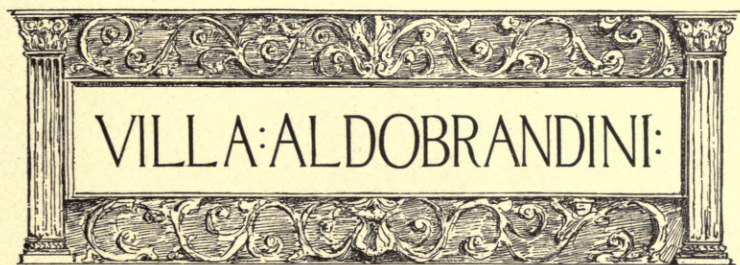


IN THE GARDENS, VILLA D'ESTE

and are now far from being in harmony with the simplicity of the earliest work of the villa. It is where the overgrowth has concealed this sort of thing that time has done so much in making the present charm of the villa.







VILLA:ALDOBRANDINI:



ABOUT the same distance from Rome as Tivoli, and with very much the same situation and character of country (except that it is less abrupt), is Frascati, which contains a very remarkable collection of villas. Though none of them were so elaborately conceived or so perfectly carried out as the Villa d'Este, and though in their present condition there is no individual villa of any striking importance, yet, taking the place as a whole, there is none where one finds so many villas so closely interwoven with one another, and where the Italian villa can be studied to greater advantage.

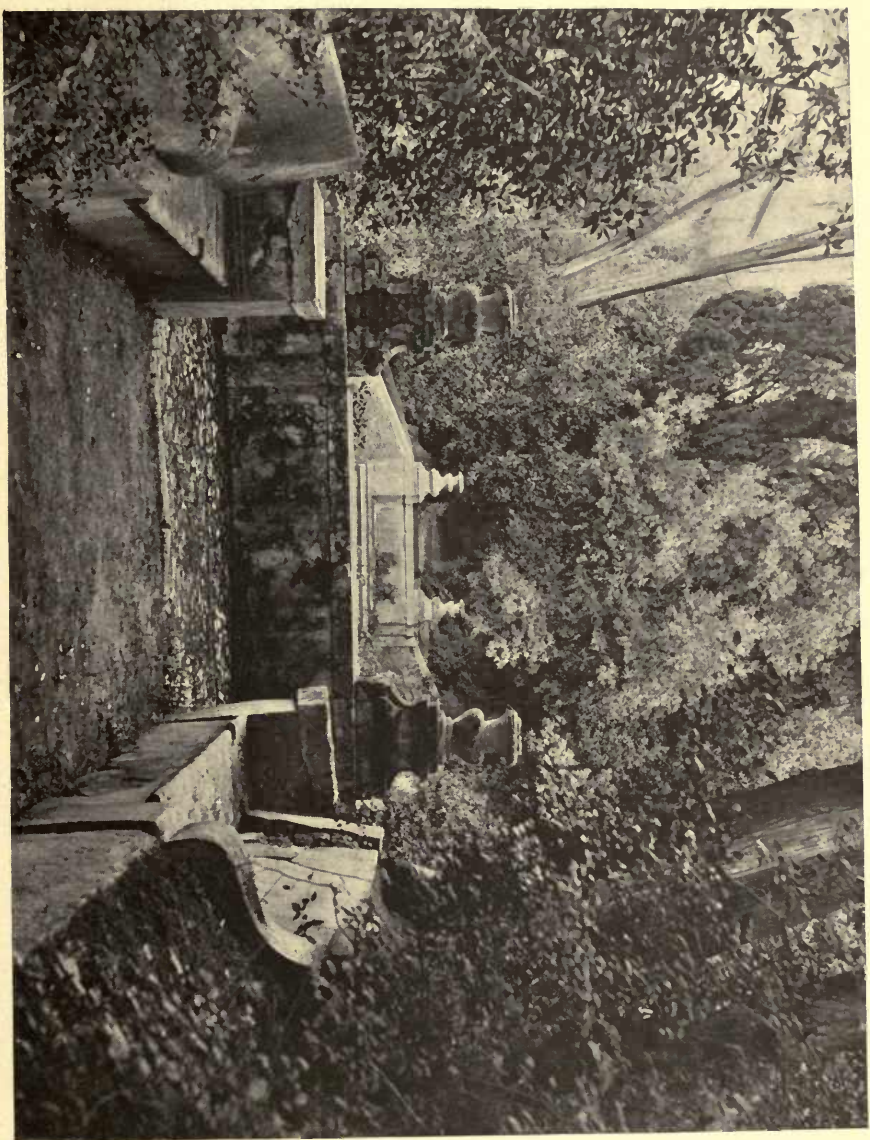
The villas Aldobrandini and Conti are the most important.

The former has to some extent been kept up, and is now in a comparative state of completeness, but, unfortunately, where the earlier architectural work has given out, it has been replaced by something that

has been considered florid and in bad taste, the result being far from harmonious. The arrangement of the terraces at the back and front of the house is very remarkable, and admirably adapted to the formation of the land. There are some interesting fountains, and the arrangement of the water-works in this villa is very elaborately carried out. The villa garden is quite shaded by enormous sycamores, and thus has of course lost its character as a flower-garden, though it has gained a certain picturesqueness and charm.

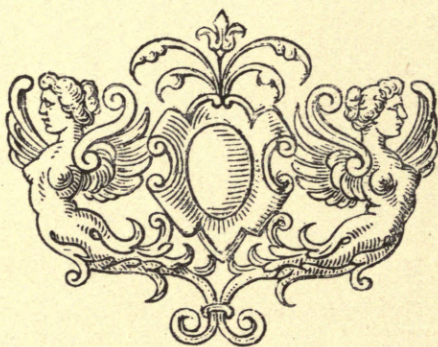
The most interesting feature of this villa is the manner in which the hill at the back of the house has been cut out and formed into an architectural semicircle with fountains. The actual architecture of the moment is very bad, the niches and grottos being filled with colossal and grotesque figures; but if one can imagine something simpler in its place, preserving the same general outlines, the scheme has very much to commend it. It is particularly fine when viewed from the doorway of the house. The eye is led to follow the line of the fountains, through a deep cut in the trees which supplant the circular terrace, over the hill to two tall columns which mark the position of the reservoir.

The straight walk leading from the public road to



A WOOD-PATH

the villa is charming in its perspective, but the ascent is too abrupt ever to make it of practical use, and it is good now only as an addition to the composition of the villa.





VEDUTA DELLE FONTANE DELLA CORDONATA E SCALE CHE ASCENDE AL VIALONE DELLE FONTANELLE

Engraving by Montanini, 1751.

Ces. Gori, una Regia di Giorgia in Roma alla Pace, 1751, del. G. P. 12.







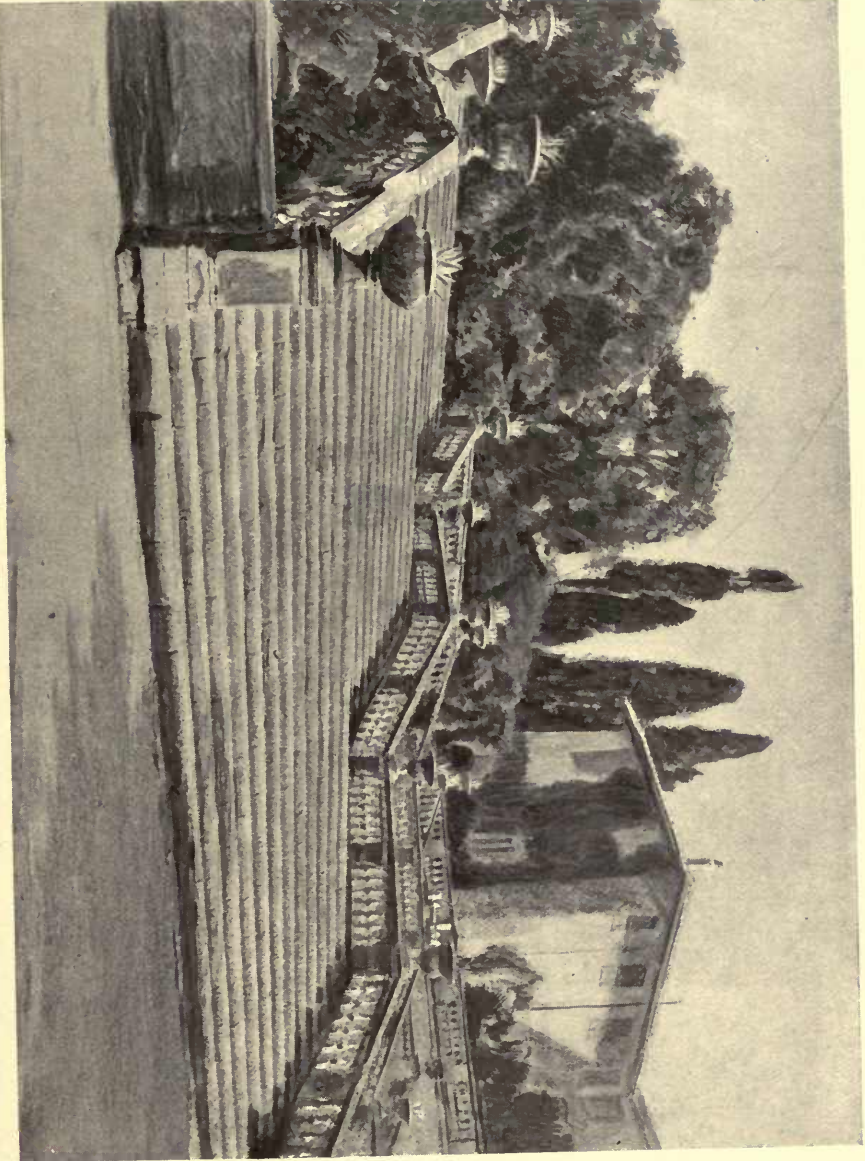
THE great feature of this villa is the elaborate system of staircases leading from the entrance-road to the grove. These stairways line the terrace literally from one end to the other, each one approaching at a slightly different angle. The intervening spaces are packed with shrubs and flowers. The reason for making the approach to the "bosquet" so important is not quite explained. Though the effect is extremely fine of these broad stairways, their perfection of detail is not quite in harmony with the house itself, which is extremely simple, with no architectural pretensions whatever; and judging from the elaborate details of the rest of the villa, it has either replaced something more important that was destroyed, or it was put there as something temporary, and never replaced.

At the back of the grove which stretches at the back of the house is a formal and elaborate terrace with fountains, fed from the top by a series of formal

waterfalls. This arrangement, though too artificial in itself, is extremely interesting and effective when seen with the morning light coming through the trees, touching the sparkling water as it comes over the falls. There is a pathway at either side of this singular series of waterfalls, and the reservoir is reached by ascending it. This reservoir is circular in form, surrounded by a beautiful balustrade, and seems to be in the midst of a wood, so dense is the plantation all about. One of the chief peculiarities of the villas at Frascati is the importance given to such reservoirs. Frequently the water has to be brought from a long distance, and before it is distributed through the fountains and watercourses it is concentrated in a large reservoir at the highest point of the villa, and of this a feature of unusual interest is made.

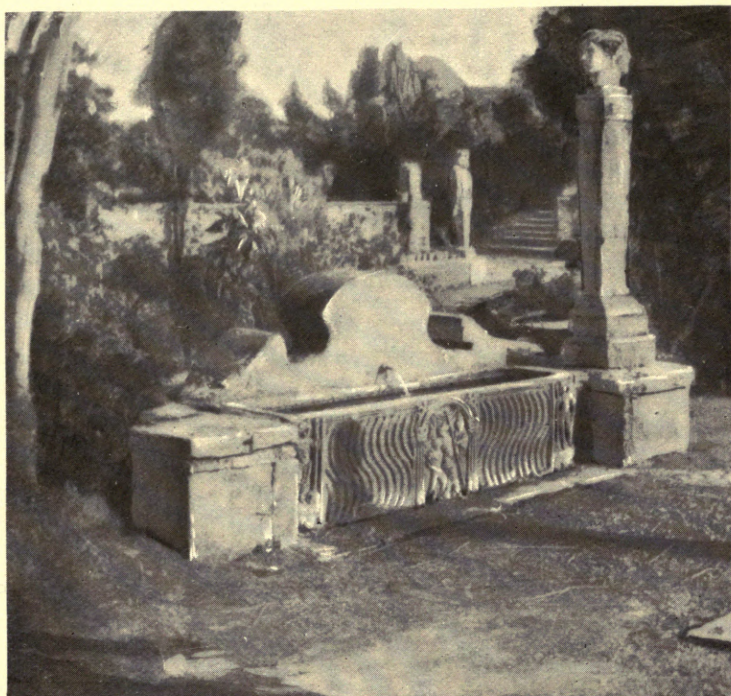


STEPS TO THE TERRACE, VILLA CONTI



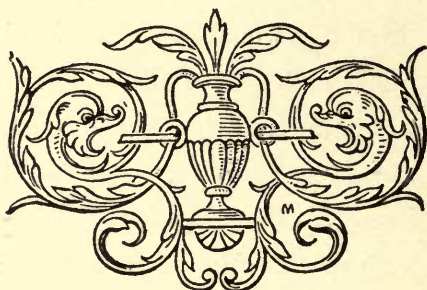


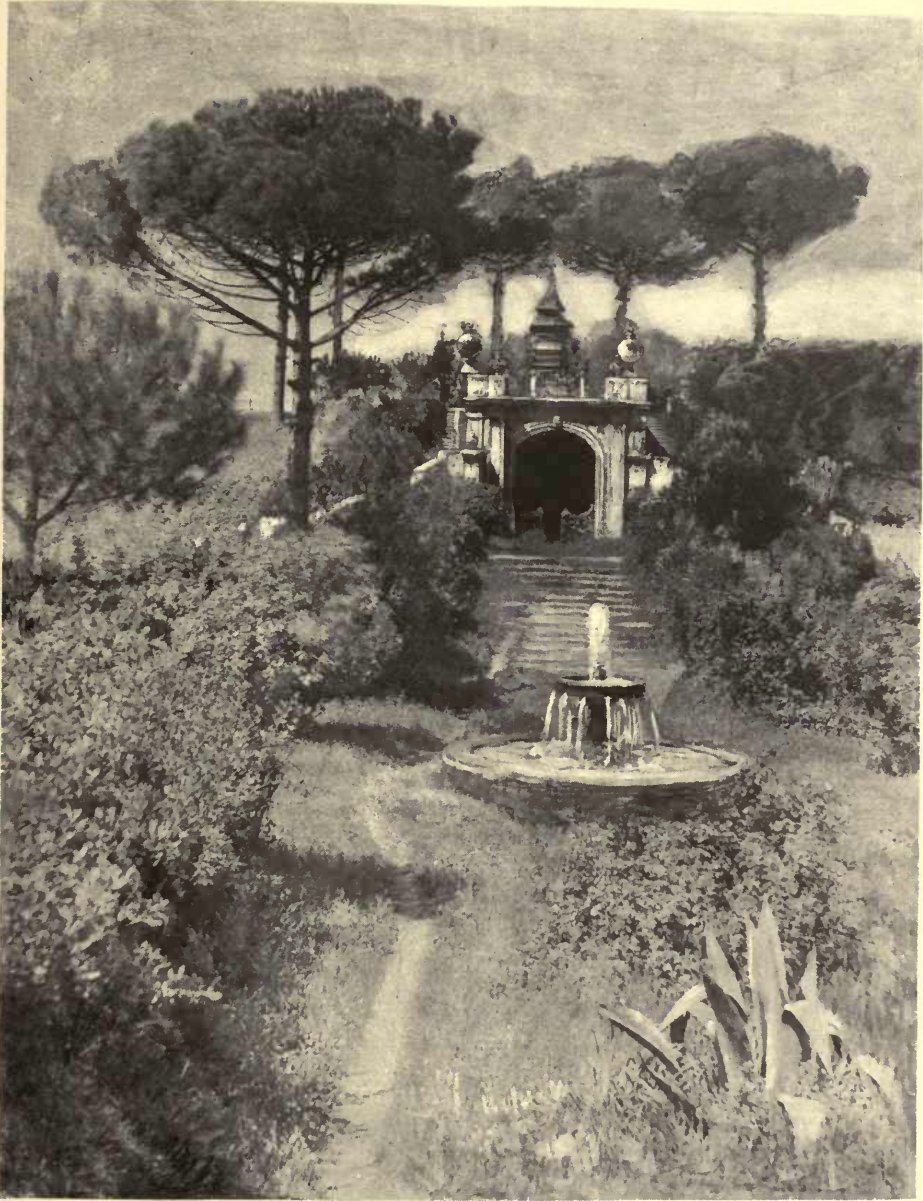




THE most elaborate and interesting one is at the Villa Falconieri, where the basin is formed on the side of a hill, one half being cut in, and the other side being supported by mason-work in the form of an architectural wall, the pilasters capped by large balls. There is a wide walk surrounding the reservoir, and the whole is enclosed by a line of cypresses, now grown very large, their great depth of color contrasting beautifully with the white walls and the mason-work. Another interesting feature of the Villa Falconieri is the elaborate system of walls which surrounds it. These are now very much in ruin, and in many cases quite concealed by the large growth of trees and shrubs. What remains of permanent interest are the sculptured gates of great variety of forms. Tall columns of different-colored marbles are surmounted either by the family escutcheons or by lions or some other emblems.

The chief entrance to the villa is under a great arch, and through a straight avenue of ilex-trees, direct to the arched portico of the house. The rest of the villa is, unfortunately, quite in ruins, which is the more to be regretted, as the fine site evidently once contained one of the most beautiful of the gardens of Frascati. The view of the campagna from the house is one of the most perfect. Surrounded as the villa is by walls, almost fortified, one might say, it is quite concealed from the outside, except from a great distance. This makes the surprise much greater, on entering, to find such a magnificent view of the surrounding country.





ASCENT TO THE RESERVOIR, VILLA FALCONIERI

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A black and white photograph of a stone gate. The gate consists of two large, rectangular stone pillars. Each pillar is topped with a classical bust of a person. A low, curved stone archway connects the two pillars. To the right of the archway, a black wrought-iron gate is partially open, revealing a dirt path that leads into a garden. The garden is filled with various plants, including trees and shrubs. The overall scene is a well-maintained garden entrance.

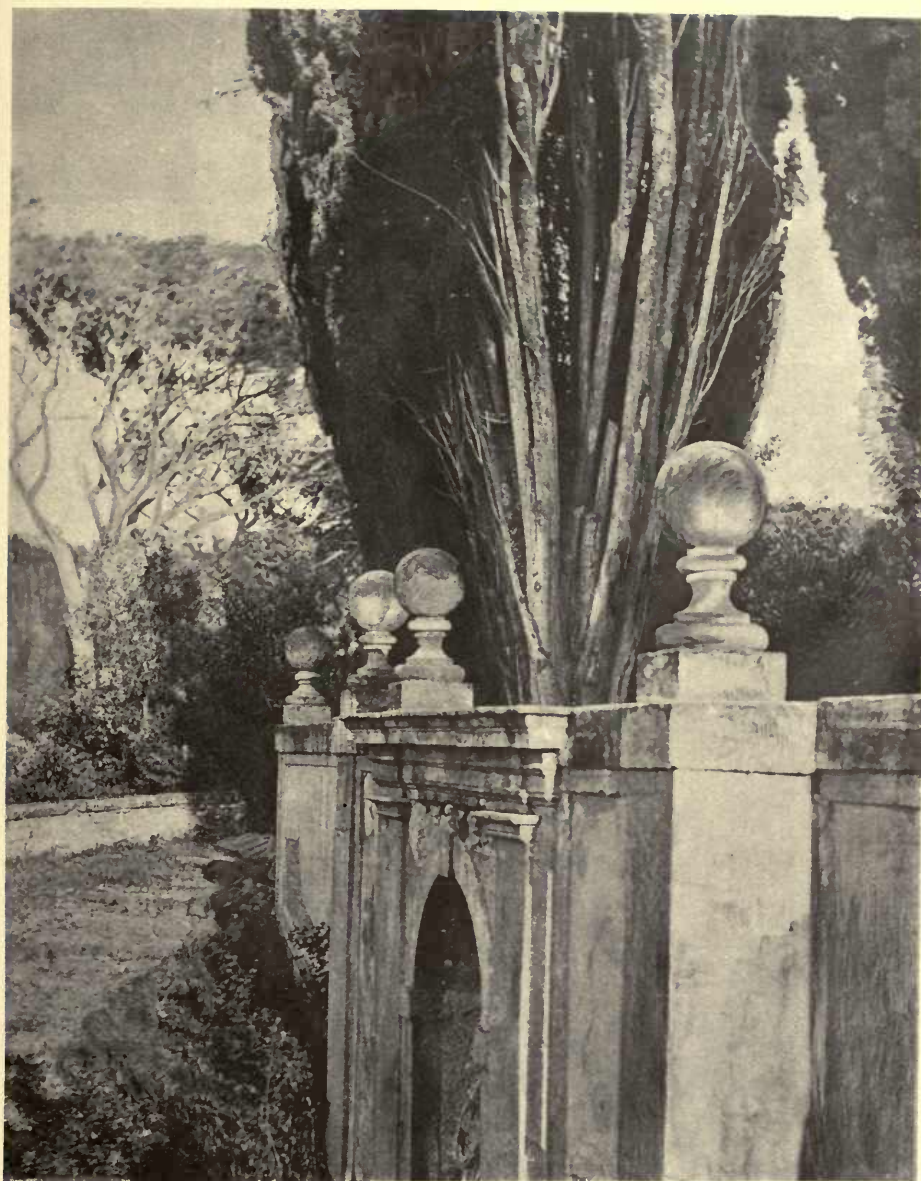


THE Villa Muti had once the most varied system of flower-gardens of any villa in Italy. The house is literally surrounded by them, all at different levels, and one might walk out of any story of the house and find one's self in a charming garden. The villa has now gone to almost absolute decay, and only the vaguest outlines of the arrangements of these gardens can be discovered. There is therefore very little there which could be so reproduced as to convey any idea of what they had been. The "bosquet" is on a terrace resting above the upper garden, and is reached by a fine stairway, which begins in full sunlight and ends in the heart of the grove in the densest shade. The reservoir is above this, and has seats about it. A great deal of terracing was necessary for gardens. The old gates and stairways which connected the terraces and the retaining wall which supported them are still in their places, and it is by this means that one recon-

structs the villa, and forms a vision of the beauty of the place.

There are two villas in Frascati belonging to the Borghese family, one of which, the Villa Taverna, has been kept up as a family residence, and the other, Mondragone, is now occupied by a Jesuit school. The palace and the scale of the gardens of the latter are of great size; but with the exception of a fine terrace in front of the house, and an avenue of cypresses which leads up to it from the public road, there is nothing left but architectural details. The walls and fountain of the old garden still exist, and also a pavilion and colonnade of remarkable dignity at one end of it; but the razed parterre is now used as a playground for boys.

The Villa Taverna has a very charming flower-garden, which is reached from one wing of the house. It is raised above the road, and is, in fact, so enclosed and supported by architecture that it seems to be literally an apartment of the house. The central fountain here is a very handsome one, surrounded by laurels cut in a circular form. There are some interesting fountains let into the wall, and the balustrade which connects the garden and the house is a very good one. Beyond this there is little here to detain



A FRASCATI RESERVOIR

one, though a path which leads from the house to the grove is interesting on account of the unusual open character given it by the use of deciduous trees—something quite unusual in Italian villas.

There are other interesting corners to be studied in the minor villas at Frascati—a small flower-garden here and an ilex walk there, and fountains and abrupt stairways and architectural details; but the great charm of the villas at Frascati in their now dilapidated condition is in their beautiful sites, placed as they are high above the campagna.

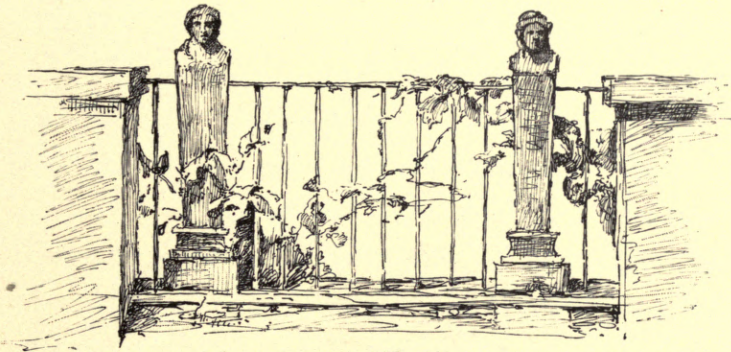
With such magnificent views, and with slopes so delightfully accidental, it seems it would be difficult for an artist-gardener not to produce beautiful results, particularly as the Italians in their construction of summer villas rarely allowed ideas of convenience to interfere with their desire to produce a beautiful effect.





OLD GATE, VILLA MUTI



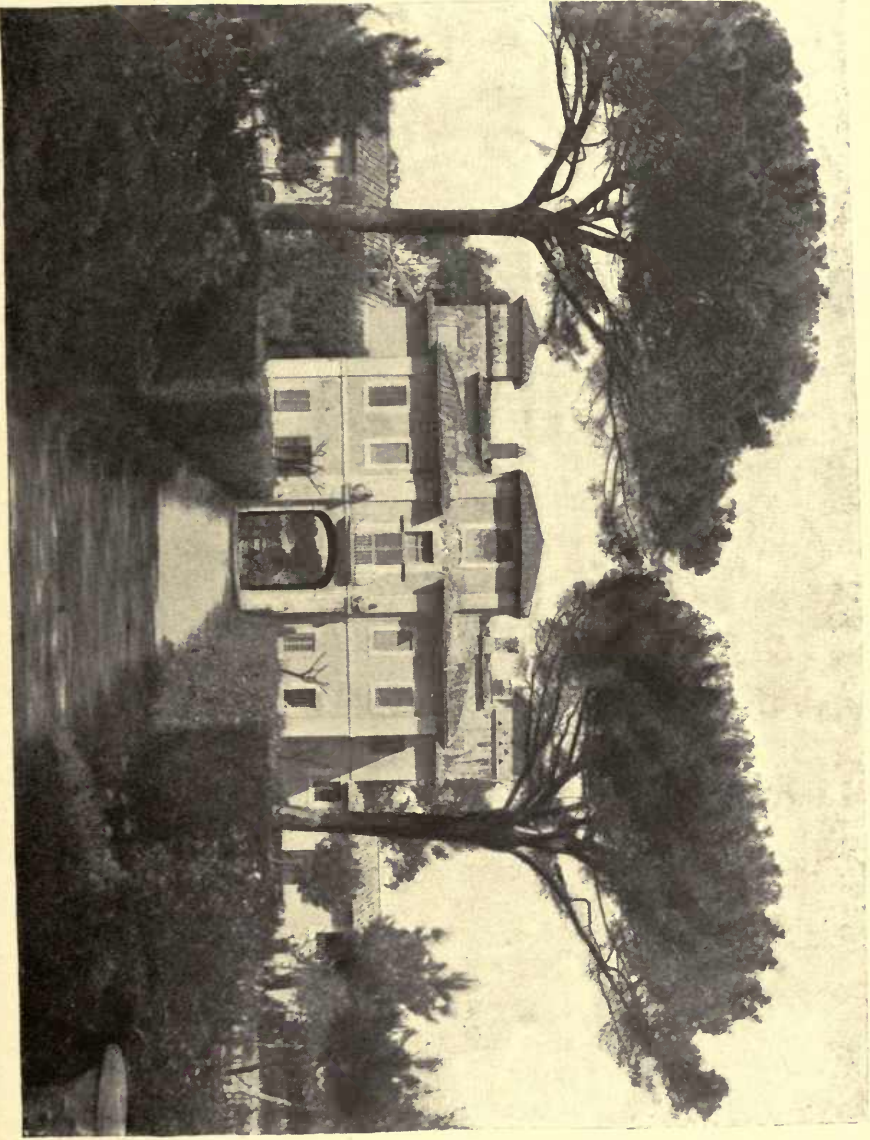


VILLA·FALCONIERI

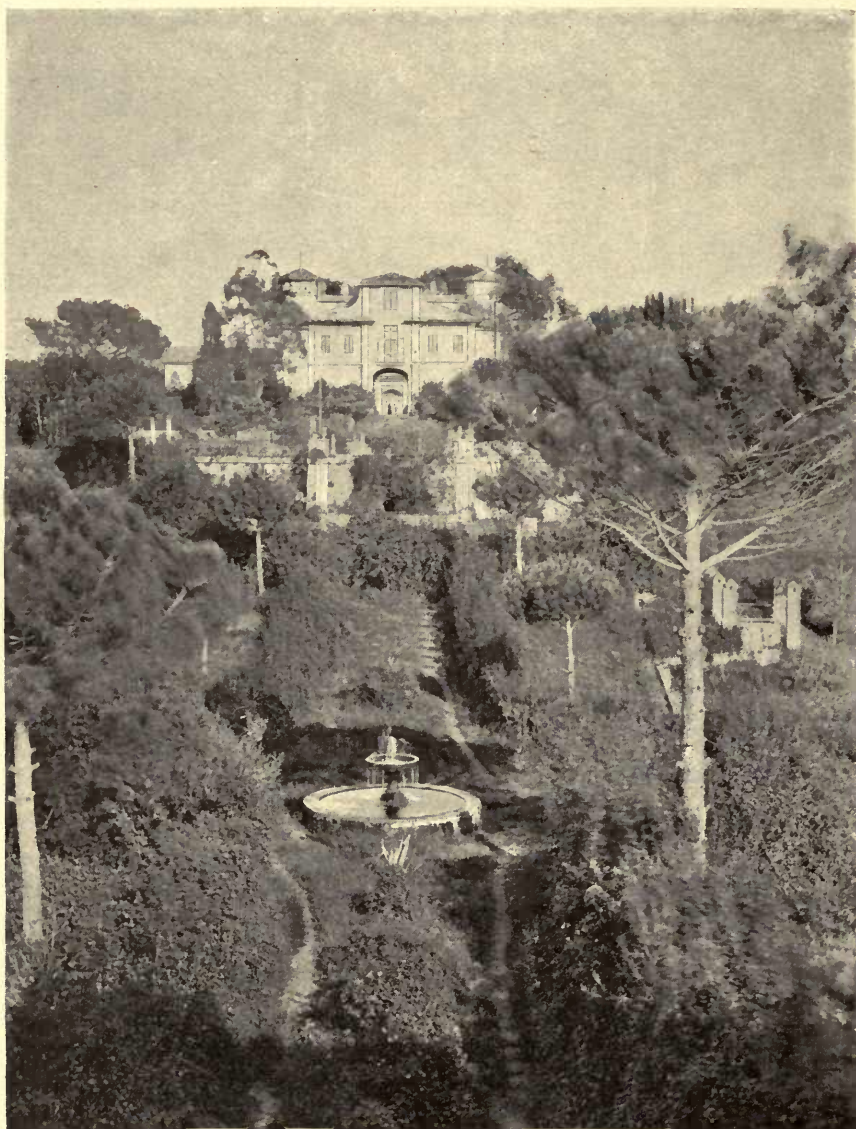


ON the other side of Rome, in the opposite direction from Frascati, there were some extremely interesting villas, but the lowness of the land and the unhealthy character of the campagna have long made them uninhabitable, and in most cases all that remain of them are interesting ruins in the midst of fields and pastures. Percier and Fontaine have made restoration of some of these, and it was in the author's vain endeavors to discover the site of the Villa Sachetti that one much less important in itself was discovered, but so compact, admirable, and simple in its adjustment to a small area of land that it was thought worthy of a particularly careful study. This is another Villa Falconieri, though in no way connected with the one at Frascati. It is not distinguished by an elaborateness of architecture or by the extent of its gardening, but is rather something of a compromise between the villa of a nobleman and the residence of a wealthy

farmer. Its peculiarities are due to the fact that the gardens and plantations in relation to the house do not cover a width of more than four hundred feet, being in the centre of a large farm, and allowing the land for farm cultivation to come almost within a stone's-throw of the house itself without being visible, or to any extent interfering with the effect of the gardens. The whole plan is in a direct straight line, so that upon entering the gate at the road one can look along the path and under the arched doorway of the house directly to the architectural feature which terminates the villa grounds. The flower-garden is on the side of the house away from the road, and at either side of a path which leads from the house to a circular terrace; this terrace contains fountains, and overlooks the valley which intervenes between it and smaller terraces on the other side. At the lowest point in this small valley is a fountain, and steps rise from this point in both directions, these steps being flanked by high hedges. At right angles with the first circular terrace are two ilex walks which form a screen for the uninteresting fields and tilled land which otherwise would be visible from the house, and this is also repeated on the street side, save that here the ilex-trees are planted radiating from the front door



THE ENTRANCE, VILLA FALCONIERI



VILLA AND GARDEN, VILLA FALCONIERI

and leading to other lines of trees which mark the boundary. The whole plan of the villa is well held together by a system of stone-pines, which are planted at intervals, ending in a group of circular form at the extreme end. The builders of this villa were evidently fortunate in their excavations, for they have an extremely interesting collection of old Roman statuary and carved stone, which they have made the basis of the very simple architectural features of their plan. The house itself is very simple in character, with two pigeon-towers on either side, and one feels about this place as if it were intended to be lived in all the year round by its owner, and not simply a place to fly to occasionally from the busier life of the town.

Still farther on in the same direction are the ruins of the Villa Madama, but so complete here is the general wreck that nothing is to be found which in its actual state could more than suggest its former grandeur. The house itself was one of unusual architectural beauty, and there is perhaps enough left now in the gardens and terraces to show how admirably and harmoniously the villa was planned. But further study here would be altogether a matter of research, and therefore beyond the province of this book.



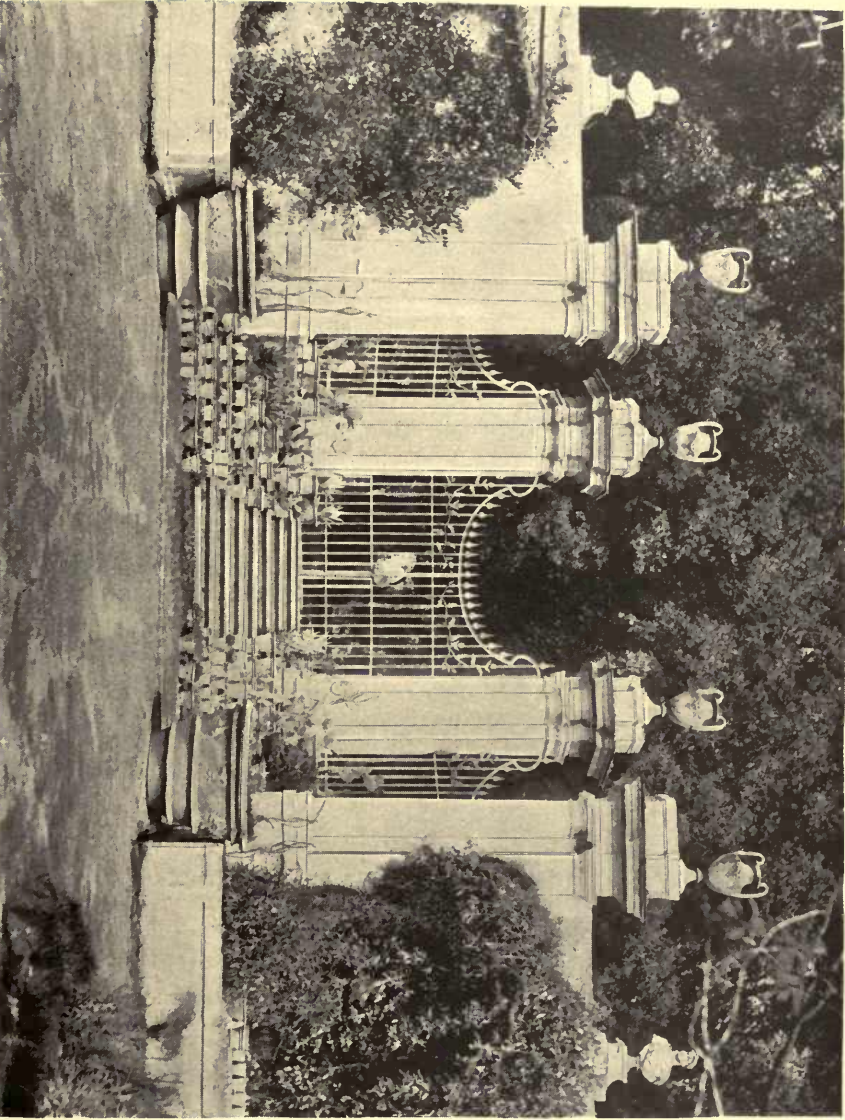


THE BOSQUET, VILLA PORTICI



IN southern Italy very little is to be found of interest to the student of the Renaissance garden. There are, indeed, bits here and there of interest in themselves, but nothing sufficiently complete to bear the character of a design. This is the case in the royal villa at Portici, now turned into an agricultural school. The architectural details bear the mark of the eighteenth century, though it is very probable that the plan, which is excellent, would date from a much earlier time. The flower-garden behind the palace is now filled with botanical specimens, arranged without regard to the design of the parterre, but the wall is extremely interesting on account of its simplicity and the form it gives to the general outlines of the garden. The gate through which one passes from here to the grove is very picturesque, the dignified columns and delicate iron-work contrasting with the deep green of the ilexes. Looking from the garden through this

gate, the grove itself presents an effect of the densest shade imaginable, partly owing to the fact that from neglect the paths in the wood have been allowed to cover themselves with moss, so that everything there is green. When one has passed through the gate and is in the grove, the great variety of green is exceedingly delightful; the only relief from it which one needs is found in the high gray wall forming a part of the tennis-court, which is reached by an arched doorway in the centre of the wall. Here is nothing but ruin; but by a little study the outlines of a capital arrangement for such a place may be traced. The north side of the court is made up of a series of stone steps somewhat similar to those in the Piazz di Siena in the Villa Borghese, made for the accommodation of spectators of minor importance who viewed the games. At either end of the court are pavilions to accommodate the royal guests and others of importance. One of them is higher than the other, and is reached by a flight of steps. At present these buildings are without roofs, and in a great state of dilapidation, their only occupants being the birds of the neighborhood.



GARDEN GATE, VILLA PORTICI







THE ruins of the gardens of Caprarola are in the same part of the country as the Villa Lante, not far from Viterbo. They contain less now for the student of gardening than for the architect, though the general plan is still visible. The relation of one thing to another is so good that the enthusiast will find a careful study of the complete design very instructive. The casino overlooks the flower-garden, its first floor being on the same level as the parterre, the second story on a level with the upper terrace, which was once enlivened with fountains, and from which there is a magnificent view of the surrounding country. In its present state of ruin, while there is much that one may see with interest, there is very little in a state to be reproduced, the most striking feature being lines of hermæ, nymphs, and satyrs which form part of the wall surrounding the flower-garden. Although these grotesque figures are characteristic of a certain ten-

dency of Italian garden architecture, to look well they should be very much enveloped in foliage, and this, it is to be hoped, is the treatment they received when these gardens were kept up. At present they are singularly out of harmony with the architectural details of the casino, and one has to see them as a part of the whole scheme, and particularly from above, to be able to judge of their effect in a complete garden.

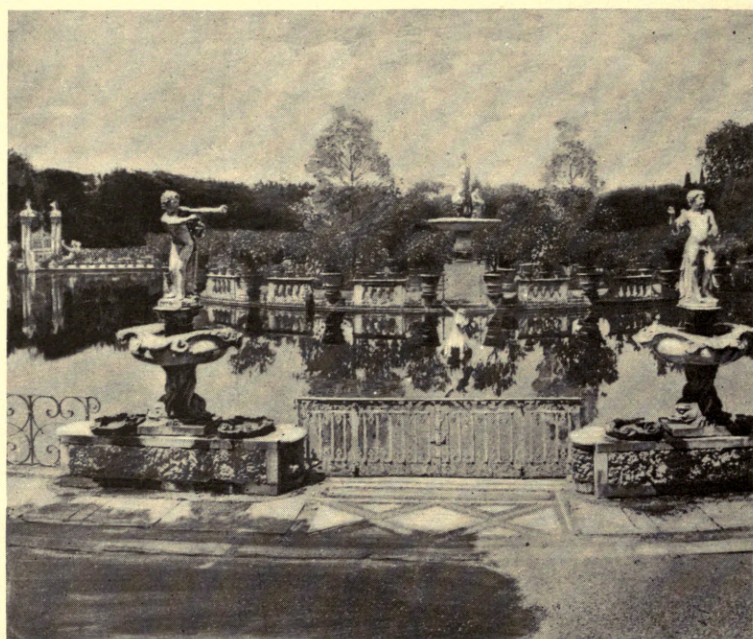




GARDEN WALL, VILLA CAPRAROLA



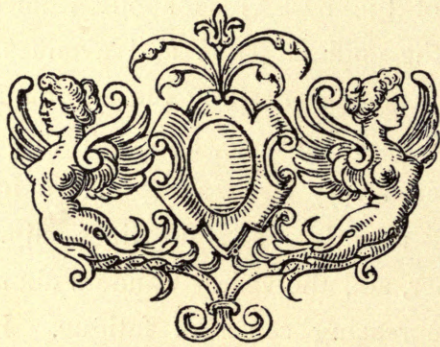
BOBOLI GARDENS

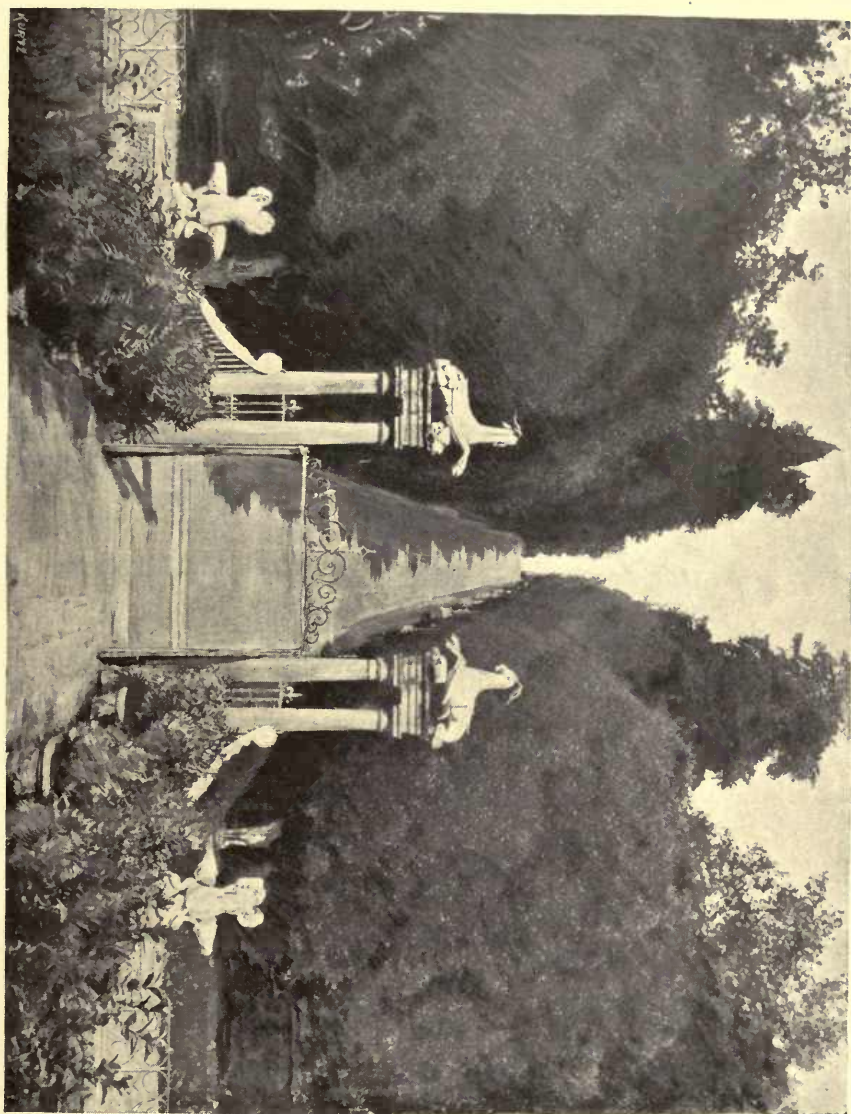




THE best gardens existing to-day in Florence and its neighborhood are due to the influence of the Medici family. Among these, the Boboli, constructed in relation to the Pitti Palace, are the largest and most important, although they cannot be said to be the most beautiful. To one thoroughly imbued with the charm of the compact treatment of the best villas about Rome, the large scale and the endless paths and avenues of Boboli are at first a shock, recalling the enormous stretches of great parks in France, although they do not in reality cover a very large area. Here interminable avenues in relentless straight lines climb one hill after another, and the visitor wanders about the place with an increasing sense of fatigue. If, however, he does not allow this fatigue to get the better of him, he will discover much that is charming in the details of the arrangements, and much that will remove his first sense of disappointment. The amphi-

theatre at the back of the palace is admirably adapted to the form of the hill-side, and the circular terraces which surround the most elevated of the ponds seem a natural formation, so exactly do they fit in with their surroundings. The Boboli Gardens, however, are so well known, and have been so thoroughly photographed, it seems unnecessary to treat them in detail here, particularly as there are other villas near at hand which one would find more interesting and characteristic of the Italian garden.





GATEWAY, BOBOLI GARDENS





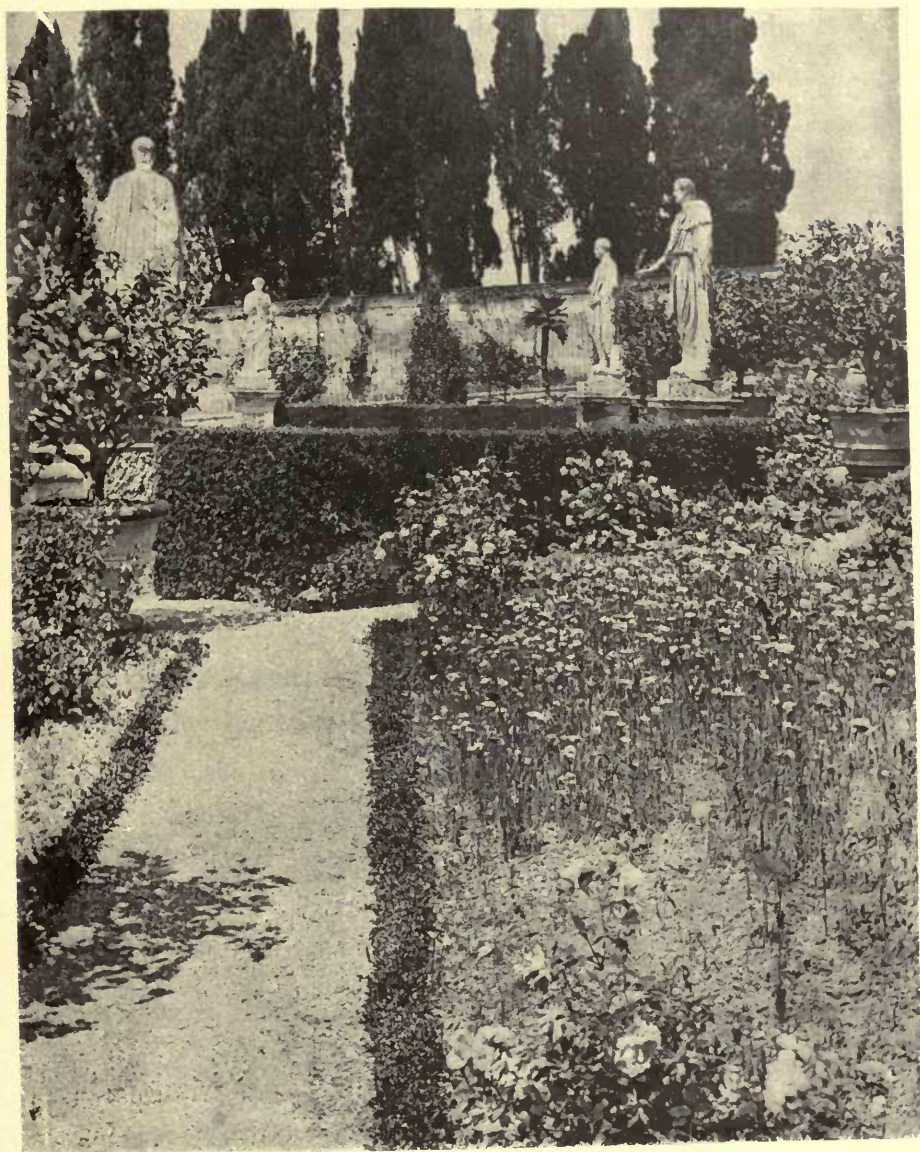


THE Villa Castello is about three miles from Florence, and built in a gently undulating country. The flower-garden is its interesting feature, and it is one of the most beautiful in Italy. It covers a large area—several acres—and is placed at the back and north of the palace, on rising ground. It is protected at the north by an architectural terrace, above which is a grove of ilex and cypress trees. A large fountain marks the centre of the parterre, with circular seats and statuary surrounding it. In the centre of the terrace, at the north, is a grotto and fountain very remarkable and dignified in character. An orangery forms a part of the east wall. The arrangement of the flower-beds is as simple as possible, and the effect of the whole is very full in regard to the plantation, and very remarkable as to bloom, for so large a garden. One is conscious only of the principal paths, so well concealed is the necessary net-work of small ones by

which the gardener reaches his plants. The arrangement of vines on the high stucco wall is an exceedingly good one—the lower part of it covered with climbing-roses, which are fastened to it with slender bamboo sticks attached to the wall, and the upper part for grape-vines, which, having grown up to a point above the roses, are made to grow laterally in lines one above the other, forming a sort of frieze. The grove of Castello is reached by two stairways, one at either end of the terrace. It is quite unpretentious in character, its one embellishment being a fountain, now very much overgrown with moss.

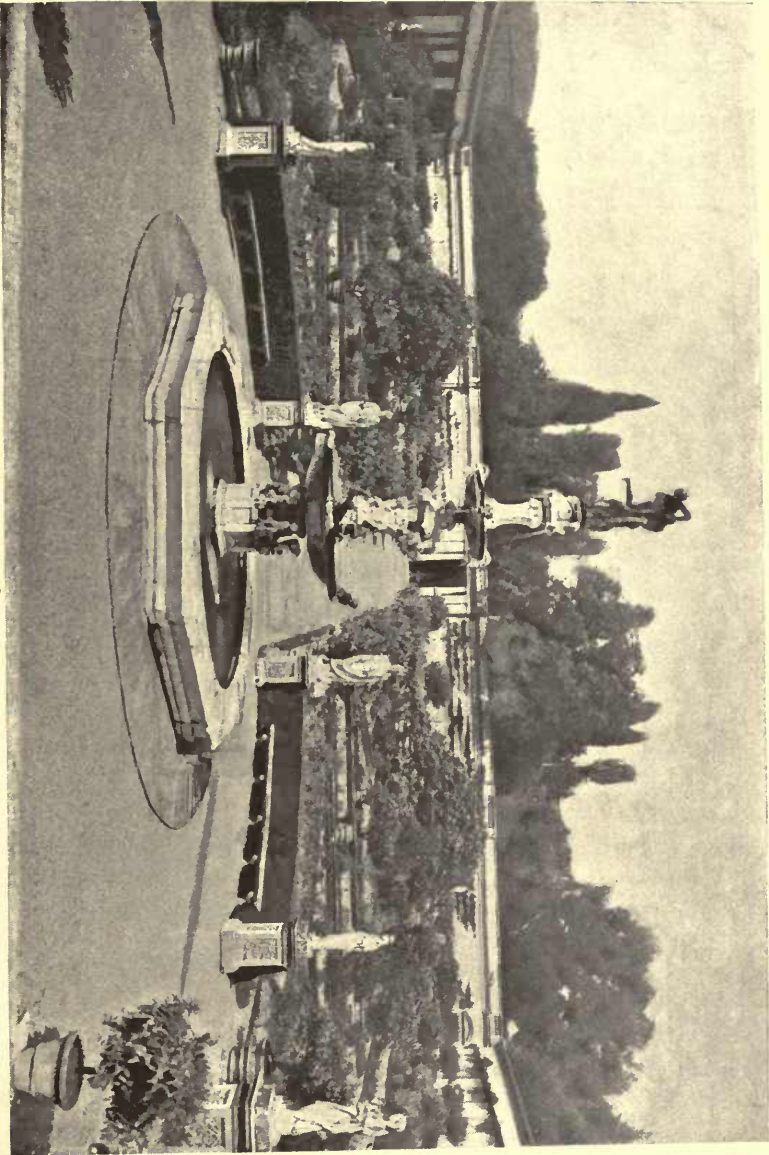
Quite near Castello is the Villa Petraea, another seat of the Medici. Here the flower-garden is in front of the house, being semicircular, with a high hedge at the north, and a terrace forming its southern limit. The abrupt nature of the hill-side is, however, ill adapted to form a flower-garden, and it has long since been filled with trees and shrubs, so that at present it is more interesting from the point of view of horticulture than that of design.

There are many interesting small gardens surrounding Florence, most of them being occupied by their owners, and are somewhat difficult of access to a stranger. If, however, he is fortunate enough to gain



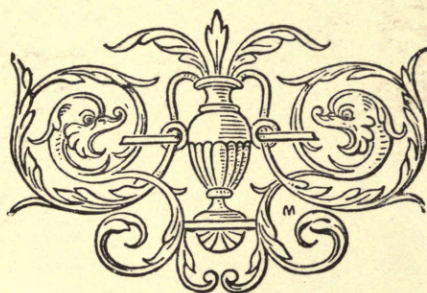
IN THE FLOWER-GARDEN, VILLA CASTELLO

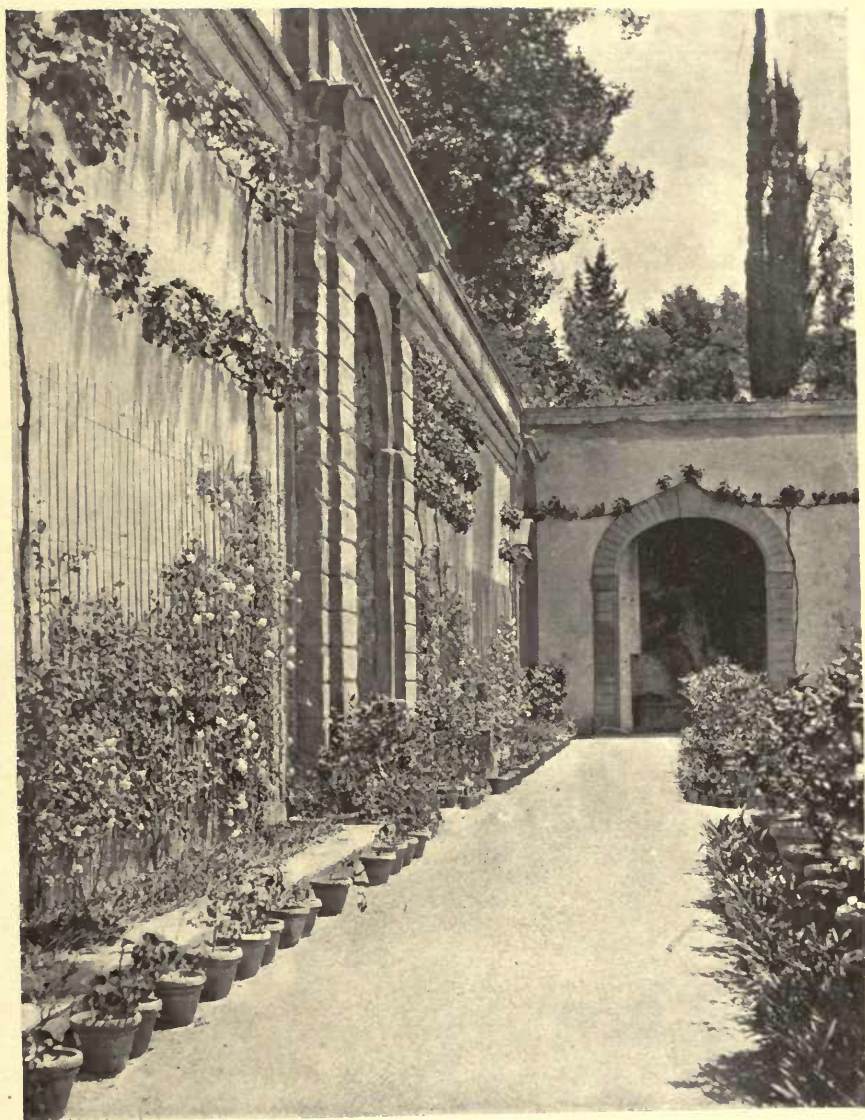
admittance, he will find something of interest in almost every one. This is the case also in the neighborhood of Siena; and while no one of these gardens is of great importance, they have a character as a whole which one should study to get a complete idea of Italian gardening. The gardens of Genoa are particularly worthy of study from this point of view. The character of the landscape here is extremely abrupt, and great ingenuity has been shown by the architects in planning villas in harmony with their surroundings. In the city itself each of the palaces has its own small garden, sometimes on the terrace reached from the wing, but more frequently above the main part of the palace, and reached by intricate and varied stairways. Formerly the gardens of the more important of these palaces stretched to the shore of the harbor; but with Genoa's prosperity these have now almost completely disappeared, to make place for new quays and streets and other improvements of a modern city. Of the two or three remaining ones the Rosazza has the most marked characteristics of a Genoa garden. Made on the extremely abrupt slope at the north side of the harbor, the paths and terraces and fountains rise one above another, and are very skilfully planned, and so interwoven with the sharp



CENTRAL FOUNTAIN, VILLA CASTELLO

angle of the hill-side that one is surprised to feel it the most natural place in the world for gardening. The architecture in the terraces and fountains is of a late and florid period, but so great is the mass of flowers that it is sufficiently concealed to become interesting.





TERRACE WALL, VILLA CASTELLO







THE impression left by this garden is one of great tangle, and of a profusion of growing things mixed with the most charming garden statuary. On entering through the palace, one finds one's self in a broad avenue of cypresses; to the left is the flower-garden, and to the right a grove, arranged in open spaces among the trees, with fountains as centres. At the end of the cypress walk is a high and very precipitous hill-side, which forms the background of the garden, and is densely covered with evergreen trees and shrubs. On this hill-side one catches glimpses here and there of architectural construction, and at the top is a small temple, with a terrace which overlooks the garden and house, and beyond that the City of Verona. The garden has been allowed to go very much to ruin in its details. Few of the old fountains are running, many of them being filled up with earth and planted with flowers, sometimes with a statue marking its centre.

It was very difficult in this garden to get a view which seemed to give a true impression of the place, or which in any way revealed the design. In looking down from above there were too many trees in the way to make this possible, and from below there was no point at a sufficient distance to see the parterre as a whole. The statuary of this garden is particularly charming, being mostly of nymphs in flowing garments, giving a festive character very much in harmony with the gayety which one looks for in such a place. In one's mind they make an agreeable contrast with the Roman senators and headless deities which do duty in most of the old Roman gardens.






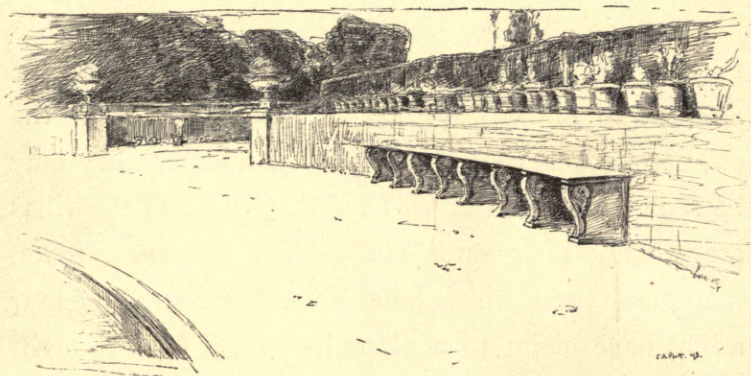
THE GUISTI GARDEN



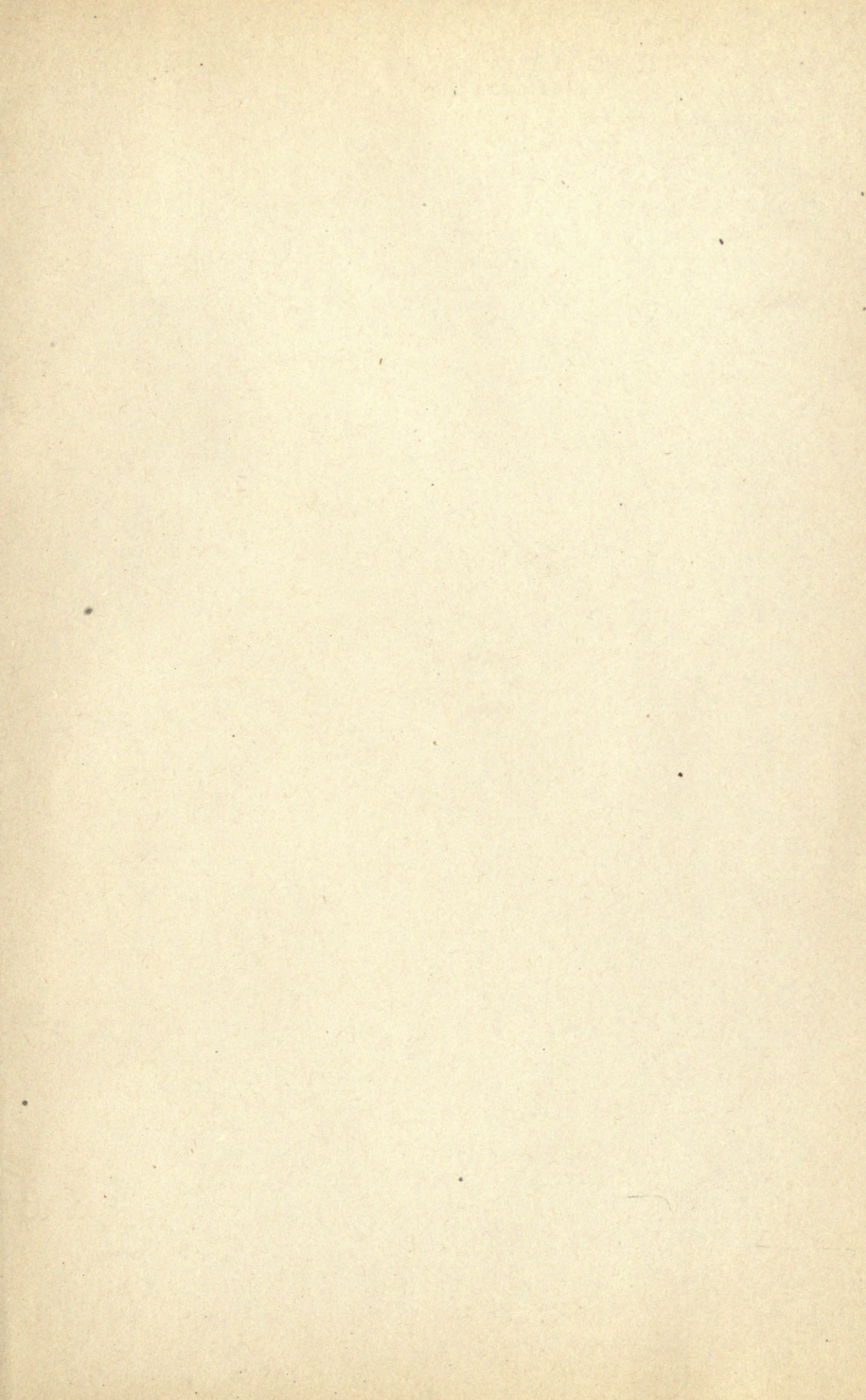


N closing these brief notes descriptive of the gardens of Italy, the writer would like to add, with a view of tempering criticism, that they should be taken purely as supplementary to the illustrations. It has not been the purpose to make a treatise on landscape-gardening, but a simple attempt to show some of the most salient of the existing features of the formal garden as they may be seen to-day in Italy. Doubtless some of the villas are worthy of greater study than has been given them, and some which have been left out altogether might have claim to a place here; but it is thought that those considered are sufficient to give a comprehensive idea of the methods of the Italian in the treatment of the garden. With the general interest that undoubtedly exists in the subject of gardening to-day, it is hoped that this work may be of value towards a more thorough understanding and appreciation of the reasons which led to a formal treat-

ment of the garden ; and as there is a great similarity in the character of the landscape in many parts of our country with that of Italy, that it might lead to a revival of the same method.



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